THE·SUPREME·PROBLEM

RAUPERT

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THE SUPREME PROBLEM

AN EXAMINATION OF HISTORICAL CHRISTIANITY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF HUMAN LIFE AND EXPERIENCE AND IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA

BY

J. GODFREY RAUPERT

WITHDRAWN

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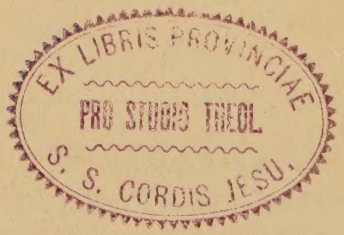

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PREFACE

THIS volume does not claim to be a theological treatise. On the contrary, it is written from the standpoint of a layman, who has thought much and long on what he conceives to be the supreme problem of human life, and who believes that the conclusions which he has reached respecting it, may be helpful to other thoughtful and reflecting minds. He is thoroughly convinced, in spite of a thousand appearances to the contrary, that the solution of this supreme problem is easier and simpler than is commonly supposed, and that it lies within the reach of all men of honest mind and good will.

The book is thus essentially a human document.

It is constructed upon, and appeals to, the simple and universal experiences of human life, and its reasoning is according to what may in fairness be called the necessary laws of human thought. It takes the facts of life and of consciousness as they really are, and draws from them simple, natural, and self-evident inferences. It does not occupy itself with speculative theories or philosophies, or schools of thought, since these cannot, from their nature, contribute towards the end which the author has in view. It is, in his opinion, because of the multiplicity of these philosophies and theories, and of the exaggerated importance and interest which are apt to be attached to them, that the fundamental

truths themselves have become obscured, and that there has arisen the present almost hopeless confusion of ideas and beliefs. It is because men have ceased to be simple and to recognize the facts of life as they really are, and to be true to the instinctive dictates of their nature, that there are so many perplexed and miserable hearts in the world to-day.

The author is convinced that the return to truth and to God is by way of the return to simplicity, and to the recognition of first and necessary principles, and by a due appreciation of those constant inward experiences, in their relation to Revealed Truth, which, in the normal man, indicate, not only the deep needs, but also the high possibilities of his nature.

It is only too evident that in the strife of creeds, and in the conflict of philosophies, simple and fundamental things have been ignored and neglected, and that the voice of the soul has been silenced or, to put it in another form, that the soul has lost God in arguments about Him.

It is of the soul, therefore, not of philosophers, or scientists, or even of theologians, that the author has enquired respecting the greatest of all problems, and it is its voice which he has made to speak in this volume. That it may speak in true and clear accents to men of good will, and by its message of simple, sound reason and common sense tend, in some measure, to calm the hideous strife of tongues which is at present disfiguring our religious and moral life, is the author's sincere desire and fervent prayer.

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem stated—Contradictory systems of thought—Impossibility of a solution along such lines—The necessary claims of Revelation—False methods of thought respecting them—Revelation in the light of human experience—The Catholic Creed a true basis—Its two fundamental principles.

I AM convinced, from the complex experiences of my life, and from my study of man, in many lands and under varying conditions, that the subject of Religion, the question as to our duty here, and the destiny of our souls hereafter, must ever be, for all normally constituted minds, the greatest and most engrossing of all problems. I am further very thoroughly convinced that, fashioned as we are, real and abiding happiness in life is impossible, so long as this problem remains unsolved, and as there hovers over the soul the shadow of doubt and uncertainty.

Conclusive evidence, in support of this statement, may be found in the circumstance that human nature, in spite of the manifold diversions and interests of life, will persist in returning to this problem, and that the most sceptical of scientific men cannot leave it alone. In a pronouncedly rationalistic and worldly age we have the remark-

able spectacle of an incessant evolution of new religions, and of a literature in which the discussion of religious problems is the predominating feature. This remarkable fact is, to my mind, of far more significance than the contents of these respective teachings and religions, and the particular views which individual scientists and philosophers may happen to express.

It demonstrates conclusively that the distressed and confused human soul is seeking for some kind of thought or principle, upon which it can construct some sort of belief, and that behind the apparent scepticism and nonchalance of the age there is the sense of grave and persistent uneasiness. In view of the boasted growth of an agnostic and negative philosophy of life, we have positively no other way of accounting for the remarkable phenomenon.

But it is just this growth of new religions and philosophies, this incessant publication of religious essays and articles, this discussion and re-discussion of questions concerning Christ and His teaching, which have introduced into our life that painful confusion of ideas from which we are suffering so much, and which is so effectually keeping thoughtful minds from facing the supreme problem. The heart is sick and the head is faint and the intellect is hopelessly puzzled and perplexed.

There is Mr. Campbell, and the New Theology. There is Prof. Lodge, and his New Catechism. There is Annie Besant, and the Theosophical Philosophy. There is Mrs. Eddy, and Christian Science, There is the new Emmanuel Movement. There are

High Church, Broad Church, Low Church, and No Church. There is the Modern Higher Criticism of the Sacred Scriptures and its supposed ascertainments; the notorious Encyclopædia Biblica. There are schools of Theology, and of Christian thought. There are the unitarian, the positivist and the agnostic systems. There are monists and materialists and a hundred other productions of the speculative human reason, haunting the intellect and confounding the judgment, and leaving the soul in a state of helpless and paralyzing inactivity.

And there is not the slightest guarantee that this evolution of religious and philosophic systems will not continue, and that we shall, in this matter, reach in the course of time any kind of finality. There is no guarantee that a future Campbell will not present us with a still "newer" theology, and that a future Oliver Lodge will not construct for us a still "truer" Catechism.

It must be clear at a glance, that for the really serious mind, earnestly seeking after truth, there is a vast and fertile field to be explored, and the longest life would be too short and the best education too inadequate to enable him to determine, with any degree of certainty, which of these various systems of thought most closely approaches the truth. His choice, in any case, would be determined by his own peculiar temperament, and by his particular intellectual and philosophical leanings. From accurate reflection, therefore, we must draw the conclusion that by such methods, and on such

principles, the discovery of spiritual truth becomes impossible and unthinkable, and that we cannot hope by them to ascertain those things which we are above all things anxious to know.

And it is equally certain, that if a Revelation, disclosing to us these things, has been given, the ascertainment of its verities cannot lie along such lines of research. For the very idea of a Revelation implies the unfolding of something which, in its fundamental principles at least, the intellect cannot discover for itself. Its truths, therefore, must appeal for their acceptance to some human faculty, to some voice speaking with clearness and precision and finality and, in its elementary operations, not very greatly varying in different minds.

Let it be assumed, for instance, that in the sphere of Christian teaching, critical and historical research respecting the Sacred Scriptures could be shown to be the best and the legitimate method of eliciting the fullest truth, the very method would destroy its claim to be a Divine Revelation; for the results thus ascertained would of necessity remain in the possession of the learned few, and could not come within the reach of the toiling and struggling classes of mankind. The latter would not have the means of verifying such truths for themselves, and of translating them into principles of belief and of conduct. They would at best accept them on the ground of their confidence in some well-known person or recognized human authority.

The very claims of a Revelation, therefore, estab-

lishing and maintaining itself on such a basis would, of necessity, fall to the ground. It must be clear that it is upon a different kind of evidence that a divine and authoritative Revelation must establish its claim, and that it is to different principles and to a different method of verification that it must appeal.

Cardinal Newman has very clearly expressed this truth in the following words:[1]

"It is plain that if the Church is to be an available guide to poor as well as rich, unlearned as well as learned, its notes and tokens must be very simple, obvious and intelligible. They must not depend on education, or be brought out by abstruse reasoning, but must at once affect the imagination and interest the feelings. They must bear with them a sort of internal evidence which supersedes further discussion and makes the truth self-evident."

I believe that such evidence respecting the Christian Religion exists, and that it is both simple and coercive for every person of right judgment and of normal instincts, and that if men of the modern age throw doubt upon the great verities of Faith, and discredit its evidences, it is not because they are of superior attainments and intellect, but because their methods of enquiry are at fault, and because they have twisted their minds and played tricks with their fundamental and natural instincts.

I believe that the entire modern method of dealing with the problem is at fault, and that in the determining of these great and vital questions too

[1] *Essays* I, *n.* 4.

little attention is paid to the facts of human experience, to the testimony of the human conscience, and to the operation of that faculty of the soul by which spiritual truth is apprehended.

By an extraordinary confusion of principles, and by a loose and inaccurate method of thinking, an impression has gained ground in the public mind that the man of physical science can speak with authority in matters of religion; that his views on the supreme problem of life are of more weight than those of other thinkers. It is difficult to understand how this idea has ever come to find acceptance with reflecting minds, unless it be due to the incessant intellectual trumpet-blowing to which we have grown accustomed in the present age, and to that senseless science-craze which has somehow established its reign over some of the very best minds.

I am not concerned with the ascertainments or supposed ascertainments of physical science, in their relation to the problems of man's physical life. They may be great and many, and it may even be possible for some to harmonize them and to put on paper in what they exactly consist. I have never been able to do this, and have only got so far as to ascertain that the science of to-day is not that of yesterday, and will most certainly not be that of to-morrow.

And as I realize the shortness of life, and am profoundly impressed with the conviction that, even within its own sphere, the best science is most hopelessly at sea, I do not trouble myself about the

matter. But how it has ever come to be believed that the man of physical science is to be regarded as a better authority on the question of the human soul, its origin, and destiny, and of the ultimate purpose of life than any other person of reflecting mind is to me one of the greatest of problems. Why the world should ever be disturbed by his pronouncements on matters of religion or of faith passes my understanding. What can he possibly know of such doctrines as the Fall of Man, Redemption by suffering, the eternal consequences of sin, that any other man of sound reason and of reflecting mind cannot be supposed to know? On what grounds is the value of his testimony on the subject to be considered greater than that of the latter?

On the contrary, is it not much more probable that any ordinary person of reflecting mind, not having unduly exalted his intellect over other faculties of his nature, but allowing all his faculties to bear their testimony, will be found to be a much better and safer and more reliable judge in the matter than the specialist who pursues one exclusive line of research? We know how fully Darwin, in his later years, recognized the peculiar dangers to which the exclusively scientific method exposes the mind, and how conscious he became of the consequent unreliability of his judgments.

Let it be borne in mind that, in matters religious and spiritual, it is against the man walking, "according to the wisdom of the world" that St. Paul warns in an especially emphatic manner, and that it is this

man whose judgment we are most to distrust and to discount. "How could physical science, for instance," writes Mr. G. K. Chesterton, "prove that man is not depraved? . . . . . There might have been ten Falls, and the thing would have been quite consistent with everything that we know from physical science. . . . . Nothing can be, in the strictest sense of the word, more comic, than to set so shadowy a thing as the conjectures made by the vaguer anthropologists about the primitive man, against so solid a thing as the sense of sin."[1]

"I cannot imagine," says another writer, "why the interest in the physical sciences should be so keen. At the best, what do we gain when all that can be known about the body has become known. Our bodies are not ourselves and their ultimate destiny is the worm and the grave. And the science of the body does not help us much, after all, to understand the science of the soul: the origin of thought and consciousness, the powers and possibilities and ultimate destiny of that Ego which we know and feel to be the all-important thing. Of this, physical science has told us nothing, and by reason of its evident limitations, can tell us nothing. When I have ascertained whether there is more evidence in favour of an evolutionary production of the body, or of a creative one, what do I know then? what does it help or benefit me? What I do want to know is, how and where I originated, why I am

[1] *Tablet*, Sept. 4, 1907.

here, and what my future destiny is to be when that fragile body will be no more."

It is consoling to reflect that the master scientists of all times have never assumed this attitude of mind. They have recognized the limitations of knowledge, and have refrained from passing beyond their own particular sphere of research: have readily acknowledged that physical science cannot possibly pronounce upon the great ultimate problems of life and of the soul. The best of them have been, and are, men of simple faith, who are content to believe in the trustworthiness of their own instinctive moral convictions, and who consequently see no need for ridiculous and impossible compromises between Religion and Science. I need but point to Lord Kelvin, in England, to Louis Pasteur, in France, both of whom have made their simple but very unmistakable confession of religious faith. It is evident, therefore, that the modern, loud-voiced investigator of nature, who tells us what we must or must not believe respecting the greatest of all problems, and who suggests absurd compromises, or invents quack religions, is of necessity the second-rate or inferior man, whose views on the subject are of little weight, and whose contributions to its literature are often more than worthless. The scientific phrases and the complex terminology which he employs are often but the cloak under which he hides his own profound ignorance of the matter. But, unfortunately, the mischief has been done; the confusion of ideas exists, the loud-voiced quack is just the man who succeeds in making him-

self heard, and it is the latest novelty in science and religion which meets with the ready acceptance of thousands. And amidst it all lies the human soul, bewildered and paralyzed and world-sick, not knowing whither to turn for peace and certainty and salvation.

It seems to me, therefore, that a time has come when the great historic doctrines of Christianity, which have been believed in for so many centuries, and by so many noble and exalted minds, should be examined, not so much in the light of documentary and scientific evidence, which is, at best, but fallible and unsatisfactory, but in that of human experience and of the claims and testimony of the human soul and conscience: when that voice should be allowed to speak, which a false philosophy has silenced so long, but which nevertheless remains for mankind, its safest and ultimate court of appeal. For it must be clear that just as no amount of instruction and exposition can make a man a musician, who has not got a musical ear, so no amount of theological teaching can make a man a Christian, whose inner nature does not harmonize and correspond with that teaching, and whose instinctive judgment does not recognize the reasonableness of its claim. The soul and its experiences, therefore, have a pre-eminent right to be heard in the matter.

And it is the Creed of the Catholic Church which I shall take as the dogmatic basis for my argument and examination. I shall do this, not only because it is the Creed which I profess, and which I believe to express the truth which has been revealed, so far as

human language can express it, but because at the present time no other uniform dogmatic basis is available, or can be constructed. The Catholic Creed alone places us on the sure ground of history and of tradition; and the Catholic Church is the only Church which, in all ages, has claimed divine origin and authority, and which, for many centuries, has been the voice of God for men. It is the Catholic Church which, because of the one-ness of her Creed, must for evermore have the strongest claim upon the human heart and its allegiance. Outside that Church and its fixed historic Creed all is confusion and disorder, and while we should discover theological views and schools of thought, we should find it difficult to fix upon a single article of faith on which all agree, and which could serve as an undisputed and indisputable basis for an argument.

Now there are two great dogmas of the Catholic Church which will be universally admitted to be historical and fundamental and upon which the entire system of historic Christian thought is built up. They are the dogmas of the Fall of Man, and of his Restoration and Redemption through Jesus Christ. It is to these two fundamental truths of the Christian Religion that I propose to address myself, and it is from the facts of universal human experience and from the constant witness of the human conscience, that I shall seek to show, that in their simple traditional and historic form, they constitute the one true Christianity, and remain the one rational solution of the supreme problem of human life.

I am profoundly convinced, that it is by such a return to simple things; by a recognition of great universal and fundamental principles, and by a right interpretation of the manifest and constant needs of our moral nature, that we shall get back to truth, that we shall come to see how near it is to us, how clear and certain and self-evident it is, and how hopelessly some of our modern thinkers have lost their way, and have gone astray.

It is thus, I am persuaded, that we shall get some inkling of the deep meaning underlying those solemn and stately words of the Apostle St. Paul: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge, falsely so called—which some promising, have erred concerning the Faith."[1]

[1] I. Tim. vi. 20

THE SUPREME PROBLEM

I

THE FALL OF MAN

Catholic doctrine and human experience—Reasonableness of the doctrine—The limitations of science—The facts of conscience.

IT must be clear to all intelligent men that at the foundation of the entire system of Christian thought lies the doctrine of the Fall of Man and of Original Sin. Unless the principle or truth contained in this doctrine be admitted, the historical Christian conception of a redemptive and restorative process cannot, strictly speaking, be conceived.

And behind this idea, of course, lies the idea of a personal and holy God, to Whom man is responsible, and against Whose clearly-recognized laws it is possible to offend.

I do not, in this connection, propose to concern myself with the technical arguments demonstrating the existence of a personal God. I take that existence for granted, and I do not for a moment believe that any person of really balanced mind doubts it.

This truth is so clearly impressed upon the human consciousness, that I consider those who deny that they believe it to be telling an untruth, or to have tampered with the normal manifestations of their moral nature. And I am speaking from a considerable experience of life, and from an accurate study of human character, when I say this. It is astonishing how inconsistent men are apt to be in this matter and by what devices they will hide their true convictions. There are persons who will deny the existence of God in the company of friends and of intellectuals, while they will, coward-like, ask for forgiveness and fall upon their knees when they are alone and unobserved. They will be the first to cry to God for help in the moment of danger or in grave sickness. I have so often observed this inconsistency and this conflict between the manifestations of a superficial intellect and the voice of the soul, in the varying conditions of life and in my intercourse with men in many lands.

Men of really well-balanced minds, never doubt this truth, because the most elementary operations of their moral and intellectual nature force it upon them, and because their consciences constantly bear witness to it.

The "New" Theology (which by the way is a very old one, and an heretical one into the bargain), is seeking to impose upon the unwary of mankind a pantheistic sort of god, who has somehow (its inventors seem to know how), brought the world and themselves into being, but who must not, strictly speaking, be conceived of as in any way concerning himself much about either. And we are

boldly asked to look upon this conception of an impersonal cause of the world as a higher and a more intellectual one than that which unperverted human nature postulates. But this revived antique heresy, apart from all that may on technical grounds be urged against it, plainly runs counter to the necessary laws of human thought and to human reason, and it is on this solid rock that it must evermore suffer shipwreck. We are apt to take these modern vapourings much too seriously, and to resort to mistaken methods of controverting them. There is no need whatever to be alarmed about the matter. There are such things as necessary modes of thought, and fundamental moral instincts, and these are not so easily set aside. Human nature, though apt to make little excursions, and to fall in love with passing heresies, is also apt to recover itself and to regain its balance. And we need but let it become true to itself. In such a matter as this, the opinion of the speculative learned individual is of very little value. What unperverted human nature always and everywhere experiences and proclaims, must necessarily be the higher truth. The individual may err, but human nature collectively cannot err as to its fundamental instincts. The simplest process of accurate thought leads to the conclusion, that a personal, holy God exists; the most elementary manifestations of conscience confirm it, and there the matter ends, for the wisest as well as for the simplest of men. Outside these natural manifestations, all is speculation and guess-work.

We acknowledge, of course, in these conceptions,

the human limitation. We call to mind that God is God and not man, that a finite being cannot fully apprehend Infinite Being, that we have no terms in which accurately and adequately to express the conviction which fills our minds. We even acknowledge, that since we cannot get beyond the limitation of our human nature, there must necessarily be something anthropomorphic about our best and purest expressions. But this does not affect the conception itself, and the emotions and sentiments to which it gives rise in our hearts. We know that the personal God is, and that knowledge abides with us, so long as we do not tamper with the simple manifestations of our nature, or allow right reason to be overshadowed by a false philosophy. It is according to right reason to conclude, that the effect cannot be greater than the cause, and that whatever is in the effect must also be implicitly in the cause. Whatsoever is in nature and in self must also be in God; probably very much more also, but so much at least. We find in ourselves self-consciousness, personality, conscience, and the power to act by self-direction. It is self-evident (at least to all balanced and normal minds) that the Cause of all things which called these powers and faculties into operation, possesses them Himself—plus, of course, all those inconceivable powers which are the attribute of the Uncreate and the Infinite. An unconscious force could not possibly produce a self-conscious mind, and an impersonal entity could not create a person; a non-moral force could not product conscience. Blind

necessity, again, could not evolve a free agent. Unless God be also self-conscious, personal, righteous, and free, He has made in man something nobler and better than Himself, which, even "new" theologians must, in their better moments, admit to be manifestly absurd.

I do not propose to enter further than this into the matter; because if this simple logical process of thought does not convince, nothing else will. Everything else is technical and academic. Belief in the existence of a personal God, to Whom we are morally responsible, is, as all human history indicates, a primary and necessary inference, consequent upon the most elementary processes of thought. Those who have lost that truth have, in most instances, not lost it because they have seen valid grounds for believing otherwise, but because they have twisted their minds, and tampered with their judgments, and have created for themselves a false conscience.

It is unfortunately too true that the world has lost God in arguments about Him, and the return to God is only possible if men will cease from argument, and allow the soul to take counsel with itself, if, to use the language of Holy Scripture, they will become again little children.[1]

But the truth of God's personal existence as the moral governor of the world, once fully and

[1] . . . . the being of God, writes Cardinal Newman, is as certain to me as certainty of my own existence, though when I try to put the grounds of that certainty into logical shape I find a difficulty in doing so in mood or figure to my satisfaction. —*Apologia.*

clearly apprehended, moral disorder and action, contrary to His recognized law, on the part of His free creatures, become not only conceivable, but indeed more than probable and indeed inevitable. Right thought must necessarily lead to the conclusion that in the creation of a free, moral being the Creator must have had a moral purpose, and that this purpose could only be the preparation of man for a higher state of existence. But part of his present constitution being a bodily life, attended by many and diverse delights and enjoyments, calculated to be a means to an end and to sweeten existence, a condition of trial and of choice would necessarily be created, and there would arise the possibility of man being diverted from his true end and of making his choice in favour of present and immediate delights. There would arise the possibility of his living and acting *contrary* to the clearly-recognized will of the Creator.

It is difficult to see how such an aspect of the matter can be regarded as unreasonable, or how any rightly-thinking mind can evade the inference. And the inference is reached without even approaching the sphere of Theology proper. Indeed, the man of accurate thought would have to reach it, had he never heard the story of the Fall. The simplest but accurate operations of the mind compel it, and the conclusion can really only be evaded if we are in the grip of some preconceived theory or have ceased to be true to ourselves.

But the existence of God and of the free will of man admitted, we find ourselves face to face with

a problem which baffles and has baffled the keenest intellects, and of which neither the man of science nor the philosopher has found the solution. For how are we to account for the extraordinary circumstance, that, from the earliest time to the present day, man has chosen the lower path and has shown himself a rebel against God? How is it that in spite of the dictates of his moral nature and of the unfailing voice of conscience, his lower passions and desires and appetites have gained the victory over him, and have not only brought unspeakable misery upon him, but have manifestly led him away from his pre-ordained end and destiny? How is it that the pleasures of sense and of sense-gratification, the indulgence of base inclinations, of envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness have always proved much easier for him than the exercise of the contrary virtues and qualities? We cannot surely believe that God, while endowing man with free will so that he might, by its right exercise, ennoble his nature and attain his high destiny, nevertheless fatally biassed that will in a definitely downward direction from the very beginning, and of deliberate purpose made the things of sense infinitely more attractive to him than the things of the spirit. How are we to reconcile such a thought with the conception of a just and righteous God and continue to speak in any intelligent sense of the freedom of will and of a choice? If, therefore, man experiences in himself a violent attraction downwards and if, in spite of inward admonitions and warnings to the contrary, he fails to resist that attraction, this is

evidence, surely, that there is some constitutional disorder in his nature, and that for some reason, not immediately apparent, the lower senses and appetites have lost the power of obeying the dictates of reason. It is evidence that the equilibrium of his faculties has been fundamentally disturbed.

Now it is just this truth which the Church teaches in her doctrine of the Fall, which she scientifically formulates and expresses, but which, it seems to me, would be a truth without that, and will most certainly be a truth while the world lasts.

And it is to wilful and deliberate rebellion and obedience on the part of the first man, that the Church attributes this constitutional weakness and disorder. It is to an aboriginal act of pride and of a mistaken choice, suggested by an external tempter, and in its disastrous effects affecting all human nature, that she declares this fundamental moral disorder to be due.

It is difficult to see what reason can possibly urge against such a view of the matter or on what grounds it can be shown to be unscientific or unphilosophical. On the contrary, is it not a view which best and most adequately solves the perplexing problem, and is it not science which proclaims to us the mercilessness of the law which would seem to be at work here?

"It is chiefly in the spiritual personality," says a modern writer, "that we must seek the cause of the worst evils heredity entails upon us. But if this law holds good generally, it must surely hold good peculiarly with regard to the first act of sin in

the progenitors of the race. This involved a shock to the moral and physical nature which we can now only faintly measure. It was the rupture of the original bond between the soul and God, and its effects must have been proportionately great."

There is probably in our English literature, not a more admirable statement of the case from this point of view, than the famous one from the pen of Cardinal Newman, which occurs in the "Apologia." The Cardinal there says:

"To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and requirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things, as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'having no hope and without God in the world,' all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.

"What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from his presence. Did I see a boy of good make and mind, with the tokens on him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birth-place or his family connexions, I should conclude that there was some mystery connected with his history, and that he was one, of whom, from one cause or other, his parents were ashamed. Thus only should I be able to account for the contrast between the promise and the condition of his being. And so I argue about the world; if there be a God, since there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence; and thus the doctrine of what is theologically called original sin becomes to me almost as certain as that the world exists, and as the existence of God."

Orestes Brownson[1] expresses the same truth in the following beautiful words:

"No man can analyze the facts of human experience without finding them prove incontestably that our destiny, whatever it be, lies above the level of our present natural powers. Our race, then, must have once possessed powers, natural or supernatural, which it does not possess now, and, therefore, powers which it must have forfeited or lost. All facts of experience as well as universal tradition

[1] *Necessity of Revelation:* Brownson's Review, 1848.

bear witness to some great catastrophe, to some terrible revulsion, which man at some remote period must have suffered. The soul appears to every nice observer to retain traces of a lost grandeur, and to be filled with an undying regret for what once was, but is no longer hers. She appears to be tortured by her reminiscences. Even before illumined by faith, she regards herself as expelled from her early home, as an exile from her native country and a sojourner in a strange land. She bears with her the secret memory of a lost paradise, for which she sighs, and with her recollections of which, dim and fading though they be, she contrasts whatever she finds in the land of her exile. What is the poetry of all nations but the low wail or wild lament of the soul over her lost Eden—the music in which she expresses the wearisomeness of the banishment and her longing to return and dwell again in the sweet bowers of her early youth, of her childhood's home?

"Here, in these reminiscences, which play so important a part in the Platonic philosophy and which the Athenian knew not how to interpret, is the secret of that weariness and disgust which the soul experiences in the midst of all this world can give, of that deep regret and ceaseless sorrow which nothing earthly can charm away.

"Earthly goods and pleasures are not congenial to her nature; they are not the food she was originally fitted to live upon or relish; the table the world spreads before her is not that which was spread for her in her Father's house; the embraces lavished upon her are not those of her chaste spouse,

and she receives or returns them only with a feverish shame. . . . Hence, also, the universality of sacrifice proves the universality of the belief in the primitive Fall, that man has fallen from his original state, and now lies below the level of his destiny, without the ability to attain it."

It is exceedingly interesting and instructive to observe the feats of mental gymnastics which some of our modern scientists and "new" theologians are performing round this palpable truth — by what ingenious devices they seek to evade it, and to mislead the minds of the unwary. The most grotesque theories, clothed in scientific form, are proposed for our acceptance, and terms are employed which, when freely analyzed, have little or no meaning. Anything and everything is held to be scientific except the plain dictates of reason and the collective testimony of mankind. The unwelcome truth must be got rid of at any cost!

It occurs to few persons to inquire how far science can legitimately be supposed to pronounce on such a matter; what knowledge it can be said to possess that the simplest and humblest intellect may not possess also. I would say again, that I must not in any sense be supposed to imply by what I have said, that the testimony of the human consciousness must be considered to be the foundation of the doctrine of the Fall, and that it yields the material of which the doctrine is constructed. The Church teaches the doctrine, because it is a fundamental truth of Revelation, upon which the entire system of Redemption and Restoration reposes. What I maintain is, that

disbelief in that Church and Revelation does not disprove the truth, and that the doctrine could never have met with universal acceptance, did not man's moral nature bear witness to it and sanction and confirm it, and did not a hundred facts of human life and of human experience constantly and emphatically demonstrate it.

It is unnecessary, in this connection, to consider how far the contention of materialistic evolutionists, that the higher moral and intellectual faculties of man have originated in purely physical conditions, and that their beginnings may be traced in lower forms of animal life and in subsequent environment, demands consideration. Some very foolish things were once said on this subject by popular interpreters of the Darwinian theory, and were repeated by men of superficial and shallow minds. But there is not a scientific man of note to-day who would seriously make such an assertion, or who would maintain that it was justified by scientific observation, or by accurate philosophic thinking.[1] It is clearly seen, that no degree of material evolution could possibly lead to the manifestation of thought and to the development of intellectual and moral

[1] In a recent article on "New Light on Primitive Man," the writer says:

"We consequently abide by the pronouncement made by W. Branco, director of the geologico-palæontological institute of the University of Berlin, at a meeting of the fifth International Congress of Zoologists:

"'In the history of the earth man appears before us as a true homo novus, not as a descendant of preceding generations; he presents himself suddenly and immediately (not mediately) in the diluvial period as a homo sapiens, every inch genuinely man."

faculties. These are manifestly phenomena, differing from material processes in their very nature and origin. The conflict, therefore, which is here under consideration, could not be traced to any such source. The very notion itself involves a contradiction, and is offensive to right reason. Indeed it is difficult to understand how intelligent minds could ever have entertained it. The idea of an ascent of life, terminating in moral conceptions and warring against the conditions and elements which have given them birth, is a manifest philosophic absurdity. And since there is no other intelligent theory, attempting to explain the admitted conflict occupying the ground, it is to the oldest and most universally accepted theory of all that we have to address ourselves.

In my view as to the form in which the story of the Fall is presented in the Sacred Scriptures I bow, of course, to the decision of the Church, and to the statements of her best-informed theologians: but to me personally it would matter little what construction be put upon the story by the higher Old Testament critic: whether it be ultimately accepted as it stands, as the accurate presentment of the facts of the case in a primitive age; or whether the account be regarded as the dramatic form in which the human mind has clothed the great truth. The truth itself retains, it seems to me, on either interpretation, its full force. The intellect may have its difficulties about the matter: for the heart, there never was, and there never can be any doubt.

Nor are the facts of the case in any wise affected

by the philosophical or scientific objections presented by particular minds in a particular age. The questions raised are mostly confined to the academical sphere, and engage the interest of those who can afford to look upon the matter from an abstract point of view, and who delight in intellectual juggling. They ventilate their views in magazines and reviews, and indulge in lofty phrases, and tall talk. But this does not in the least affect the great mass of mankind. The conscience of the world, and the constant inward experience of right-thinking men, who refuse to tamper with their instinctive convictions, have long since decided the matter, and from that decision there is no legitimate and straightforward way of escape.

It may be quite true, as Sir Oliver Lodge tells us, that the higher man of to-day does not trouble about his sins. This is a thing much to be regretted, and is the outcome of that debased form of culture, which exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and which, in its own inflated pride, scorns the voice of nature. But not to trouble about one's sins is one thing; not to be conscious of a moral defect, and of a downward tendency in one's nature, is quite another. The first may be the result of a false method of reasoning, and of a deliberate tampering with conscience. The second would be an unnatural and abnormal state of soul, due to some influence which has distorted or paralyzed the fundamental instinct, and which has made the individual a moral invalid. The present intellectual struggle of some of our leaders of thought with the

problem of moral evil, the extraordinary devices to which they have to resort in order to find some rational and plausible solution, is evidence that they know themselves to be face to face with a stubborn truth, which is deeply embedded in the very constitution of our moral nature, and which cannot easily be accounted for and disposed of.

The sense of sin and of moral disorder clearly is a distressing and disturbing element in human life. It is apt to cause grave discomfort and uneasiness, and to interfere with the material joys and delights of men. It stands as a veritable spectre in the pathway of human life. There was every reason to get rid of it, and there have been those, in every age of man, who have made strenuous efforts to persuade the world, that it is a fungoid growth which must be and can be cut off. How is it that it has survived all the manifold and antagonistic processes of thought, and that it haunts man to-day, as it has haunted the races and nations which have gone before him, compelling the most accurate philosophical thinker of the age to admit, that it is fundamental in all the varied religious conceptions of the race?

And indeed it is apt to survive and to give evidence of its operation in cases where all the conditions and environments of life are against such survival, where all the instilled views of life and conceptions of human duty have been effaced and modified, and where "new" and modern and "enlightened" views of life and of duty have been formed.

It is most certainly true to-day, and the experience of those best qualified to express accurate opinions on the subject confirms it, that with all our boasted progress and philosophical enlightenment "conscience makes cowards of us all,"[1] and to this rule neither the philosopher nor the scientist can possibly hope to prove an exception. His constant dabbling in the matter is apt to betray him. He cannot leave the subject alone because it will not leave him alone, and he is therefore forever in search of some consoling explanation or of some plausible way of escape. He cannot bear the thought of surrender to the great historic doctrine, because there is involved in its acceptance the thought of his own exceeding littleness and helplessness, of his need of mercy and pardon. It is quite possible that, had the doctrine never before been proposed, had it not come down to us from "uncritical" ages, did it not bear the mark of the orthodox theological camp, were it less humiliating, and could he impress upon it the hall-mark of modern science, he would welcome it as a glorious truth, and he would prove to demonstration how completely it solves the perplexing problem of moral evil, and how perfectly it

[1] "The wicked flee when no man pursues. Then why does he flee?" asks Cardinal Newman; "whence his terror? Who is it that he sees in solitude, in darkness, in the hidden chambers of his heart?

"If the cause of these emotions does not belong to this visible world, the object to which his perception is directed must be supernatural and divine, and thus the phenomena of conscience as a dictate avails to impress the imagination with a picture of the Supreme Governor, a Judge, holy, just, powerful, all-seeing, retributive, and is the creative principle of religion, as the moral sense is the principle of ethics."

corresponds with the fundamental dictates of our human nature. As it is, he does what he can to discredit the doctrine, and to lead poor human nature astray.

I am convinced, however, that in this modern age too, this attempt will prove a dismal failure, and to the accurate observer, there are already abundant signs that this is most certainly the case.

But I propose to examine the matter in somewhat fuller detail, and to inquire how far human nature may be shown to confirm the truth of this doctrine, which the Catholic Church proposes for its acceptance, and upon which she builds up her system.

THE FALL OF MAN

(A)

Modern psychology and human experience — Moral and physical effects of the Fall—The case stated theologically —The witness of human experience to the wound of the intellect: its limitations; its difficulties in the discernment of truth; its aberrations in pursuing mistaken aims of life; failure of human remedies.

In his concluding lecture on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, delivered in Edinburgh in 1901 and 1902, Prof. William James, of Harvard University, U.S.A., sums up his critical investigation of the subject in the following answers and questions:—

1. "Is there, under all the discrepancies of Creeds, a common nucleus to which they bear their testimony unanimously? and,
2. "Ought we to consider the testimony true?"

In reply to the first of these two questions, he says:—

"There is a certain uniform deliverance in which all religions appear to meet, namely:—

"I. An uneasiness.

"II. Its solution.

"The uneasiness, reduced to its simplest terms, is a sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand.

"The solution is a sense that we are saved from the wrongness, by making proper connection with the higher powers.

In reply to the second question: Ought we to consider this testimony objectively true? Prof. James says:—

"Disregarding the over-beliefs, and confining ourselves to what is common and generic, we have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experience comes, a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is literally and objectively true as far as it goes."

This striking statement, based as it is upon a profound and many-sided research and upon a careful inquiry into the fundamental moral manifestation underlying all religious creeds, is, to my mind, profoundly interesting and significant. Its interest is increased when it is borne in mind that Prof. James approaches the inquiry, not from the standpoint and belief of the orthodox Christian, and that he is not in the least concerned to establish some a priori religious belief, or to construct a basis for the Christian doctrine of the Fall, or of Original Sin. On the contrary, it may be assumed that he would have preferred a conclusion different from that stated, were such a conclusion justified by the results of his research, and by the facts of the case. It is as

a philosopher and as a student of human nature, not as a theologian, that he comes to this conclusion, that he provides us with a solid basis for the most fundamental of all Christian doctrines, and that he thus indirectly demonstrates the falseness of the "New" Theology.

Now, the next question which would naturally present itself to the inquiring mind would be: What is the source and cause of this universal sense of uneasiness? And the only rational and intelligent answer is the account of man's fall and loss of God. It is contained in the first chapters of the book of Genesis, echoed in the utterances of Psalmist and of Prophet, and confirmed by the express statements, and by the entire teaching, of the Son of God.

I do not propose, in this connection, to enter upon a consideration of what the Catholic Church teaches respecting "The Supernatural"—its existence and reality, its loss by man in consequence of the Fall, its recovery through grace in the person of Jesus Christ.

In the sphere of modern theological thought, the very existence of the Supernatural, in the sense in which the Church defines it, is denied and ignored. I propose to remain, therefore, on the ground of practical and demonstrable fact and experience, and to consider that aspect of the matter which admits of examination and proof. I shall, therefore, only deal with what the Church has to say respecting the moral and physical effects of the Fall, and to inquire

whether, and how far, the experience of life demonstrates that such effects exist, and that the Church's view, as to their cause, remains the only intelligible and reasonable explanation of the matter.

The theologians of the Catholic Church state her doctrine of Original Sin in the following terms (I am quoting from authoritative and universally accepted sources):—

"Although the complete deterioration of man was brought about by the loss of supernatural endowments, it must not be conceived as a merely external change, such external change as would arise from the loss of a garment. The loss of sanctifying grace, and of all the privileges of original integrity, affects the inmost powers of the soul, intellect and will, and the command of the soul over the body, and leaves man in a state of languor and disease. Not only is man disabled for salutary works; his higher aims are taken away from him, and his natural inclination for selfish pleasure is allowed free play."[1]

The Council of Trent says: "Man lost, by original sin, the justice and sanctity in which he was constituted, and became deteriorated in both mind and body."

There will thus be seen to be remarkable agreement on this great subject between the teaching of the Historic Christian Church and of the most modern of philosophic thinkers. Both tell us that

[1] Wilhelm and Scannell: *Manual of Catholic Theology*, part ii.

there is in the first place, "something wrong about us, as we naturally stand," and secondly, that this wrongness is due to a loss which the human soul would seem to have experienced; to its lack of "proper connection with the higher powers." The philosophic thinker, reasoning as he does from the standpoint of the student of human nature, of necessity terminates his work with the bare statement itself; he tells us that the wrongness exists, and that it is borne witness to by the complex manifestations of our moral nature. The theologian, on the other hand, defines for us what the cause of that wrongness must be considered to be, in what way it has originated, and in what the consequent disorder in our moral nature precisely consists.

The question, therefore, is: Is the Church's view of the matter a right one? Does this disordered state of our moral nature actually exist? Do the facts of human life bear witness to it, and to the reasonableness of the Church's teaching?

It will be seen that human experience and the facts of life, as they really are, do constitute a court of appeal in the matter, and that in entering upon an examination of the problem from this point of view, we do not enter the sphere of theological reasoning and speculation, but that of very practical truth and fact.

Now, what has the actual experience of life to say with regard to the matter?

According to Catholic theologians both our intellectual and our moral nature have been wounded

by the Fall and its effects may, therefore, broadly speaking, be considered in a twofold aspect.

1. There is, in the first place, **the wound of ignorance, through which the intellect has been weakened so that it has a difficulty in discerning truth, easily falls into error, and inclines more to things curious and temporal than to things eternal.**

Now, is this a purely academical theological statement, for which there is no sound, reasonable foundation, or is it a truth of which we find solid practical confirmation in the universal and constant experiences of life?

Can any sane and rational man who knows something of life and of the human heart, and who has not twisted his moral nature and his intellect, doubt that the latter is the case? Is not the whole of man's intellectual life a restless and laborious search after truth, after the question of the whence, the why and the whither, and do not the pain and anguish of life consist in the consciousness that it is forever escaping him?

I am speaking of the natural man, who does not acknowledge and is not guided by what we term the supernatural light, and who is striving to solve the riddle of life by the efforts of his unaided natural powers. Does not the vague sense of limitation, in view of the restless craving of the soul, lie like a heavy weight upon him, and is it not at the very root of that disappointment which the keenest intellects are so apt to experience, and to which they give such frequent expression? In its ultimate issues it

is the impelling force in the researches of the scientist and in the speculations of the philosopher, and of that incessant questioning of our moral and physical nature which, in its complex operations, discloses and yet conceals so much. And there is not a man of awakened intellect who has not felt, that while the research itself is gratifying and stimulating, and calculated, in a manner, to appease the cravings of nature, the best and highest results of such research are disappointing in the extreme, and are apt to perplex and to sadden the mind. To the accurate thinker they constantly disclose the fact that the highest amount of knowledge gained creates but a craving for more and fuller knowledge, and ultimately the consciousness, that the fullest and best knowledge of all remains forever unattainable. Unattainable, not because of the failing of energy and of the constant burning desire for knowledge, but because of the realized limitation of human faculty, and of the inherent incapacity of the intellect to solve the supreme problem of life. The pain and disappointment are due, not to the circumstance that our knowledge is not yet perfect, but that, by reason of the weakness of our intellect, it never can be perfect, and that with our highest scientific or philosophic attainments we must remain in ignorance respecting those things which we are most anxious to know. The disappointment consists in the growing consciousness of our intellectual limitations.

The best and noblest of scientific men, in all ages of the world's history, have acknowledged this, and the confessions of their failure constitute interesting

contributions to our literature on this great subject, and are of unique psychological value.[1]

The lesser lights (and unfortunately we have many of these shining to-day) do not, of course, acknowledge even the vague consciousness of these limitations and of this inherent ignorance, but, on the contrary, claim that they are rapidly solving the mystery of life. They have profound confidence in their own mental powers and possibilities, and there is sometimes about their writings and their statements an air of astonishing sureness and plausibility. They construct their arguments by the aid of numerous "of courses" and, "there can be no doubts," and, "we may safely infers," and one is sometimes tempted to think that they have really succeeded in persuading themselves. It is very certain, however, that they entirely fail in persuading

[1] "Weak and little minds find here below the nourishment which suffices for their intellect, and satisfies their love. They do not discover the emptiness of visible things, because they are incapable of sounding them to the bottom. But a soul whom God has drawn nearer to the infinite, very soon feels the narrow limits within which it is pent, it experiences moments of inexpressible grief, the cause of which for a long time remains a mystery. It even seems as though some strange concurrence of events must have combined in order thus to disturb its life. All the while the trouble comes from a far higher source. The saints have felt that sweet melancholy, of which the ancients said there was no genius without it. In fact melancholy is inseparable from every mind that looks below the surface, and every heart that feels deeply. Not that we must take complacency in it, for it is a malady that enervates when we do not shake it off, and it has but two remedies, death or God."—Lacordaire.

"All natural goods perish. Riches take wings; fame is a bauble; love is a cheat; youth and wealth and pleasure vanish. Can things whose end is dust and disappointment be the real goods which our souls require?"—James.

and in convincing minds trained in exact thought and in the habit of carefully examining and analyzing the basis of a bold statement, or of a plausible inference.

Before such closer scrutiny these airily-constructed arguments generally dissolve themselves away, and in many instances leave the mind even more distressed and perplexed than it was before. Mankind, as a whole, is deeply conscious of the fact that science has not solved for it the mystery of life, and that by reason of the limitations of our natural powers, it is very improbable it will ever be able to solve it. And in this consciousness lies the world's anguish and pain, and that bitterness and pessimism of life of which the present age gives us so many distressing examples. Few are apt to realize that the full and acknowledged recognition of this limitation is the best and noblest achievement of the intellect, and that it is, as a matter of fact, the first step towards the attainment of the very highest and best knowledge. A certain proportion of disappointed mankind either continue their wearisome search in a faint or half-hearted sort of way, or they sink into a helpless state of apathy and indifference. All of them *easily fall into error*, "*and incline more to things curious and temporal, than to things eternal.*"

That the intellect which can thus be clearly shown to be weakened, and to experience a difficulty in discerning truth, would become prone to error, draw false and mistaken inferences and consequently

deceive and cheat itself, is a thing that might reasonably be expected. That it actually does so, is a matter of constant and universal experience. The vagaries of science and of philosophic thought show this to demonstration. The entire intellectual history of mankind confirms it. The weakened intellect of man, disordered in its several parts, and no longer illuminated by the divine light: thrown back, as it were, upon its own resources, produces from its own subconscious depths a very kaleidoscope of changing philosophies and theories, each one of them claiming to be a contribution to the solution of the supreme problem. A theory, proposing to solve the mysteries enveloping the origin of life, has scarcely made its way to the understanding of men, and passed through a process of scientific scrutiny, when its very fundamental principles are already assailed, and the beautiful edifice of purely imaginary inferences and conclusions which had been erected upon it, is seen to be tumbling to pieces, and when it is once more being realized that the thinkers of the world have been chasing shadows. The supposed truth, which but yesterday fascinated the mind, and was acclaimed as the very revelation of heaven, is to-day calmly shelved and put aside and made to pass from the remembrance of man. The intellectual gymnastics attending these transformations, and performed with a view to saving the dignity of science, are often in themselves exceedingly suggestive and instructive.

They do not apparently affect the superficial mind. It is content to hail the supposed deeper insight,

and the truer scientific discernment, and it awaits with patience the discovery of new truths. But to the thoughtful mind is it not evidence, all along the line, of the limitation of faculty, of a weakened intellect, eager to possess the truth but unable to discern and embrace it, and of a natural proneness to error and to mistaken inferences and conclusions? Is it not evidence of something amiss in the very constitution of our mental being?

The very existence and claims of the multitude of religious and of philosophic systems, which in our days are clamouring for recognition, would forcibly illustrate this truth, did men but pause to consider and reflect, and could they but get themselves to ponder over the phenomenon as a whole. They are the necessary and inevitable result of a misdirection which the religious instinct has taken, and of the attempt of the distracted human mind to find substitutes for the truth which it has lost.

The world to day is full of subjectively evolved religious systems, one of necessity negativing the truth of the other, and yet each of them has its devoted adherents, and each year gives record of the birth of some fresh cult and of some supposed newly-discovered religious truth.

A variety of "aspects" of the character and claims of the person of Jesus Christ are thus incessantly being presented to us. At the present time science and advanced critical research are supposed to have dealt the death-blow to the old orthodox conception. The claims of the Catholic Church to supernatural

origin and power are courteously dismissed, and the so-called "New" Theology is made to occupy the field. Its garments, it is hardly necessary to state, are the gaudy garments of the deliverer, and there is about it that air of sweet reasonableness which is so apt to blind and to seduce unwary minds.

There is a tacit assumption of a certain standpoint reached, of an age-long error detected and dismissed, and of the awakening of the soul from a profound and long-continued delusion. Enlightened reason is supposed to have attained to a simple and natural finality respecting the person of Jesus Christ.

But the remarkable fact is, that in spite of this accepted and admitted finality, neither philosopher nor scientist can leave the matter alone. He will persist in reverting to it, in writing and speculating on the problem, and in proposing to the intellects of his fellow-men a hundred compromises and explanations. The field of our literature to-day literally abounds in theological essays and discussions of this subject, in new apologies and catechisms, and in a hundred attempts to establish, on a permanent basis, and to fortify, the reasonable and natural conclusion which the age is declared to have reached.

It seems to strike few minds that the very interest displayed is suspicious, and that it betrays the men who are engaged in this nefarious work.

The human intellect only attacks with vigour what it instinctively feels to be a strong opponent, and to the student of human nature and the psychol-

ogist, these persistent attacks on the primitive Revelation, and on the Historic Church which preserves and defends it, constitute forcible evidence in favour of their truth. If the case was really felt to be so simple, and those distrusting the conclusions of unaided reason and accepting the guidance of a higher light, so foolish, men would leave them alone in their simplicity and foolishness; they would not constantly be reverting to the subject, and be seeking to bring them to a better mind.

Have we not evidence here, too, of the weakened intellect, experiencing a difficulty in discerning truth, "easily falling into error, and inclining to things curious." It desires to possess spiritual truth; it feels its needs, and it is conscious from its intuitions that it exists; but because of its inherent weakness, it fails to see its own limitations and its need of illumination, and as a consequence, it sets to work to bring the desired truth down to its limitations, and, therefore, to falsify, and transform, and mutilate it. It betrays its uneasiness and its lack of confidence in the process by its persistent reversion to the subject.

Some of these writers and re-constructionists remind one very forcibly of the boy, who is tormented by a sense of his misdeeds, and who has his misgivings as to the consequences, and who whistles aloud as he swaggers along the road, in order that he may get up his courage, and assure himself that there is nothing very seriously wrong.

A little humility and self-knowledge, a ready acknowledgment of inherent limitations would, I fancy, have a much better result. It would tend to extinguish many of the world's modern lights, and save distressed human hearts and minds much suffering and anguish.

The accurately-instructed Catholic, who from his very childhood has been taught to distinguish between nature and grace, and who knows that in the sphere of modern religious thinking, the very method is at fault, and that the weakened intellect can never, by its own powers, discover the truth it is seeking, scarcely knows what inestimable advantages he possesses and what an amount of vexation and suffering is being spared him. He alone can afford to remain calm while the world is disquieting itself in vain, and while the Babel of voices around him is steadily increasing. He knows that even in the sphere of science, grace, and a harmonious working together of the intellectual faculties (which is the effect of grace), are necessary, in order to enable him to form right conclusions, and to draw correct inferences. He possesses the golden key, which unlocks the door that leads to the inner sanctuary of truth. He stands on the mountain top and breathes the pure invigorating air of God, while men are contending and disputing in the valley below, and while they are, in many instances, not even aware that the pure air exists and that it is so near. He sees, at present, it is true, "as in a glass darkly;" but he sees enough to enable him to possess his soul in patience, and

to lead him, so to cultivate that God-giving sight, that he may hereafter be capable of seeing "face to face." He is not likely to be tempted to satisfy his craving for knowledge with things curious and temporal, because his very instinct tells him that fatal delusions lie along that road, and that its terminus is apt to be disappointment and despair. He applies himself diligently and persistently, and in an ordered and rational fashion, to the cultivation of the things which are eternal. Not so the man who will not acknowledge these limitations of his nature, and who continues on the broad and well-beaten path, who is not even conscious that the normal operations of his nature are defective.

And yet, how manifestly and unmistakably defective are these operations! How truly pathetic is the sight which the modern world presents to our view![1]

It is difficult to realize that the men and women of this modern world, whose deeds and misdeeds are chronicled for us day by day, have even the shadow of a conviction left that they are the creatures of eternity, and that the ultimate end and purpose of their life is a supernatural one. They have sunk back hopelessly into naturalism, and into what one may term intellectual animalism. They are for us the living illustrations and confirmations of the truth of the Catholic doctrine of the Fall. Indeed, their

[1] "Intellectual development," says Guizot, "when united to religious and moral development is excellent, but intellectual development alone, separated from morality and religion, becomes the source of pride, insubordination, egotism, and by consequence a danger to society.

doings and their mode of life would lead us to invent some such doctrine, had we not been taught it, or had we never heard it before.

I am, of course, not speaking here of the gross and palpable misdeeds of society, which the sense of social propriety alone condemns, and respecting which there is no need to argue. Even corrupt human nature, in its more refined developments, is apt to protect itself by certain laws and limitations, and to affect a certain amount of indignation and horror, even if it does not actually experience them. I shall have occasion to speak of this subject in another part of my book. What I have in mind at present, are the extraordinary vagaries of *cultivated* human nature, and the variety of paths along which it will seek for some sort of aim and purpose in life. Infinite indeed is that variety, when once the simple and right path has been missed, or has been deliberately ignored.

I must not be understood to be holding absurd and fanatical views respecting the interests and occupations of life, or to be regarding our duties and responsibilities respecting God and the future from an unreasonable and impossible standpoint. I am well aware that such an attitude of mind, if I could be shown to entertain it, would but tend to destroy the force of my argument and would make it impossible for me to enlist the serious interest and attention of reflecting minds.

I neither deny the legitimacy of scientific research or philosophic thought, nor do I maintain that the

pursuit of what may be termed worldly interests, or pleasures, or amusements, is in itself unlawful or sinful. No sane man would make any such absurd and irrational assertion. But what I do maintain is, that in view of the fact that it is still universally admitted and believed that man is the creature of eternity, and that the main purpose of life must, of necessity, be a preparation for that eternity, there is madness in the course which the modern world is pursuing, and that it furnishes demonstrative evidence that it has hopelessly and fatally strayed from the right path.

The circumstance that it is not even aware of the fact, or attempts to ignore and to shirk it, is evidence that there is an inherent flaw in human nature, which tends to obscure its vision and to distort and pervert its judgment.

Is there anything more pathetic in life than to see the man of superior education, and gifted with many talents, spend his life and his energies in the acquisition of unnecessary wealth, or in the gratification of some grotesque fad or fancy: in incessant shooting, or killing, for instance, or in the accumulation of articles which are of little use to himself or to mankind, and the mere possession of which is the element that affords him gratification. One asks oneself: What must be the moral effect of such pursuits, when they are consistently indulged in, and become ends and purposes in life?

Is there any sight more distressing than to see a refined and cultivated woman make it the aim of

her life to adorn her body with the most costly of garments and ornaments, and to spend her days and nights in displaying those garments and ornaments, and in devising schemes by which new and additional ones can be secured: to be flying from one feast and dissipation to another, and to be straining every nerve, and treading down any and every obstacle, in order that a certain prominent place and influence in society may be secured?

From a certain point of view, statements pointing out such incongruities as these are mere platitudes; they find expression in sermons and in moral exhortations, and we are so familiar with them, that they fail to impress our judgment, or our imagination. But when we really contemplate the serious facts of life, when we realize its frailty, its grave and constant and eternal responsibilities, when we consider what the state of mind and soul of such persons must necessarily be, must we not come to the conclusion that all the foundations are out of course, and that human nature has fatally gone astray?

Experience teaches, that before the sickly yearning after money, all the nobler passions of the soul become paralyzed and inactive. This is true also in respect of sensual indulgence. The loud and clamorous and ceaseless call for gratification, after a time, silences the still small voice of the heart, and there comes the day when the very sense of a higher responsibility disappears, and the silence of death reigns in the temple of God. "When once the soul

is entangled in the giddy vortex of the world," wrote the late Fr. Dalgairns, "it clings to it with a tenacity which is perfectly marvellous, and the result is, a character utterly spoiled, and a heart thoroughly corrupt."

It is true beyond all doubt, that there are thousands of people living to-day, yes, and refined and cultivated and amiable people too, for whom the question of the stomach is of infinitely greater importance than any question of the soul, and of a future life. It is upon a lap-dog, or a Persian cat that they are content to lavish the soul's energies and affections.

I have met persons whose sole interest in life seems to be centred in the collection of postage stamps, and who can think and speak and dream of no other interest in the world. I have met some whose exclusive craving is for early editions of certain books, for a peculiar kind of furniture, and curios, or for the autographs of famous and distinguished individuals.

I have known persons whose one aim and ambition is to ascend certain high mountains in various parts of the world, to have covered a certain number of miles, and to be present at the largest possible number of premières of theatrical performances.

Grotesque and, indeed, varied are the interests which fascinate fallen human nature, and which become, in some instances for the best and wisest of men, chief ends and purposes in life. The

pathetic element in these pursuits, of course, is not the pursuit itself; it is the seriousness with which the whole thing is done; the manner in which time and money and energy, and often health itself, are cheerfully sacrificed in its behalf.

It is inevitable, of course, that under such conditions the true and serious end of life be pushed into the background, and that it becomes for such persons after a time a mere shadow and abstraction. What often strikes us about such persons is a certain atmosphere of restlessness and want of repose which they would seem to carry with them wherever they go, and which they frequently impart to others. They seem never to be at peace, and to be pursuing something which is forever escaping them. They move in a world of mental extravagances and exaggerations, and their very conversation lacks sincerity and balance. They seem to be engaged in a ceaseless effort to persuade themselves that black is white, and that crooked things are straight. They are conspicuous, too, by a kind of forced hilarity. Some persons are apt to designate this state of mind by various dignified terms. They call it versatility, and brilliancy, or smartness. Younger and inexperienced persons are even apt to covet it, and to look upon it as a gift. But, alas! a little knowledge of human life too often reveals the fact, that there hides behind this apparent brilliancy and hilarity a wretched and disappointed heart, and a mind vainly seeking to distract itself and to find satisfaction. It is too often evidence of that "tædium vitæ," that weariness of life, which is so productive of nerve

trouble, of insanity and suicide, and which is in reality the consequence of the pursuit of a mistaken aim and purpose in life.

For the thoughtful student of human nature, these facts of life lead to some very serious reflections, and teach some grave and important lessons.

They demonstrate, in the first place, that cultivated human nature must have an aim of some sort. It is so constituted that it cannot, for any length of time, drift along in mere animal indulgence. It must have some purpose in view, some object or interest upon which it can centre its attention, and to which it can direct its energies. The absence of such an object would seem to leave its fundamental needs unsatisfied, and to render existence, even under the most favourable circumstances, intolerable.

They show us, in the second place, that if the true and legitimate end of life be lost sight of, or deliberately ignored, a secondary, and often ignoble aim is apt to take its place and to be made to do duty as a substitute. Such an aim is calculated to fulfil its purpose while health and money last, and while the conditions of life tend to favour its gratification. But from the fact that its gratification does not bring lasting happiness and often ends in despair and wretchedness and disappointment and "nerves," it becomes clear that the aim is an illegitimate one, and that by its exclusive pursuit violence is done to the true claims of the moral nature. It is apt to engender a consciousness that something is wrong, and that "proper connection is not made with the right kind of environment."

And this experience teaches us, in the third place, where to look for the true cause of the disease from which modern society is suffering, and where to find its remedy.

I am personally profoundly convinced, from long and careful observation, that a very large proportion of the maladies from which the modern world is suffering, is due to moral and not physical causes. They are the effect of that incessant inner conflict to which the mind is subjected, and to that hopelessly disordered state of the entire being, which is so apt to leave its mark upon the bodily health and constitution. The modern man, it is certain, is at war with himself. He is hourly doing violence to the claims of his moral nature, and the mistaken methods which he employs in order to still the tumult which is going on within, and to lull the soul to sleep, is producing all these disastrous effects which we observe in the bodily life. His perverted views of life, and his impaired mental faculties, make it impossible for him to correctly diagnose his case and, as a consequence, he becomes the plaything of the forces and influences by which he is surrounded, and over which he can exercise no control.

And I am further convinced that for thousands of persons the remedy does not lie in change of scene and of air, or in peculiar forms of bodily treatment, but in self-knowledge, in a discernment of the destructive forces which are at war in the moral nature, and in a right adjustment of those forces to

the true end and purpose of life. It lies "in making proper connection with the higher powers," as Prof. James puts it.

Would to God that we could persuade them that the effort to escape from themselves and from their disquieting thoughts is hopeless, that experience abundantly demonstrates this, and that the saner and wiser plan (quite apart from the question of a responsibility involved) would be to pause, and to listen to the "still small voice of the heart," and to become true to themselves. It should surely be clear, even to superficial thinkers, that if God has destined man for a certain end, and if with a view to the attainment of that end, He has impressed certain laws upon his moral nature, it cannot be possible for man unpunished to evade that end and to bid defiance to those laws. He may, in his perverse pride, seek to leave God alone, but he forgets that it is just possible that God will not leave him alone, and that, even at the cost of suffering and of pain, God will continue to make an effort to bring him to his senses. Certain it is, beyond all doubt and dispute, that obedience to the moral law, and a diligent pursuit of the true end of life, brings contentment, peace, and quietude of soul, cheerfulness under suffering and disappointment, and even physical health and well-being; while disobedience to the moral law, defiance of God, and the pursuit of an unlawful end of life, brings wretchedness, disappointment, unwholesome agitation and excitement and, in the physical order, a broken constitution and "nerves."

It is instructive to observe to what an extent thoughtful persons are beginning to get an inkling of this truth, and how many of the bolder spirits are confessing it openly.

The new Emmanuel movement, whatever its merits or demerits, beyond all doubt is due to the recognition of this truth.

"We and God have business with each other," writes Prof. James, "and in opening ourselves to His influence, our deepest destiny is fulfilled. The Universe, at those parts of it which our personal being constitutes, takes a turn genuinely for the worse or for the better, in proportion as each one of us fulfils or evades God's commands. I thus only translate into schematic language what I may call the instinctive belief of mankind. God is real, since He produces real effects."

In a recent paper, entitled "The Energies of Men," Prof. James tells us that Dr. Thomas Hyslop, of the West Riding Asylum in England, said last year to the British Medical Association, that the best sleep-producing agent which his practice had revealed to him was prayer. "I say this," he added, "purely as a medical man. The exercise of prayer, in those who habitually exert it, must be regarded by us doctors as the most adequate and normal of all pacifiers of the mind and calmers of the nerves. But in few of us," Prof. James goes on to say, "are functions not tied up by the exercise of other functions. Relatively few medical men, and scientific, I fancy, can pray. Few can carry on any living

commerce with God. Yet many of us are well aware of how much freer and abler our lives would be were such important forms of energizing not sealed up by the critical atmosphere in which we have been reared. There are, in everyone, potential forms of activity that actually are shunted out from use. Part of the imperfect vitality under which we labour can thus be easily explained. One part of our minds dams up,—even damns up—the other part."

Can we conceive a better, or more effective statement of the real facts of the case, than that contained in these significant words, coming, as they do, from men who have no intention of fortifying a religious conviction or of establishing a disputed religious truth. It is on the grounds of an accurate study of human nature, as the psychologist and the medical man are apt to make it, that such statements are advanced. The men who make them are probably themselves quite unconscious that they are bearing testimony to the oldest and most universal belief of mankind, and that they are giving the lie to the modern, unorthodox expounders of Christian teaching.

It is thus that God's warning and promises are fulfilling themselves in the most marvellous of ways; the very stones crying out, while the obscurantist and misled teachers of the people are holding their peace.

One is forcibly reminded of those warning words of the prophet, spoken in an age suffering from similar perversions and delusions: "Astonishing

and wonderful things have been done in the land. The prophets prophesied falsehood, and the priests clapped their hands: and my people loved such things: what then shall be done in the end thereof?"[1]

I am inclined to think that when the real facts of the case are fully faced, and when we can get ourselves into that state of mind in which we are free from pre-conceptions and science-crazes, and in which we become capable of judging according to truth and right reason, the Catholic Church must be acknowledged to have the best of the argument, and to be uttering, in her definition, an incontrovertible and eternal truth. It is in human nature, as it really is, not as modern dreamers imagine it to be, that we shall find unassailable and conclusive evidence of the truth of her theology.

[1] *Jeremias*, v. 30, 31.

THE FALL OF MAN

(B)

The witness of human experience to the weakness of the will : the modern conditions of life ; inordinate attachments ; universality of the defect ; unreasonable indulgence ; confirmations of experience ; effects in the social life ; the need of right views of life ; lessons of history.

2. There is, in the second place, as a result of the Fall, **the wound of our** *moral nature*, **which is of a threefold character and consists in :—**

(*a*) *Weakness of the will* (the will is attracted and affected by moral evil, finds it difficult to resist the inclination to evil and to practise virtue, and is inordinately attached to worldly possessions).

(*b*) *Moral Torpor or sluggishness* (a lack of the energy needed to practise virtue and a shrinking back when difficulties present themselves. There is not only a diminution of the amount of moral energy, but also of the will's control of that energy).

(*c*) *Perverseness of the appetites and desires* (they are inordinately attracted towards sensual pleasures, beyond the requirements of nature and contrary to the dictates of reason).

It is difficult to conceive of any valid argument that could be successfully urged against the truth

of this statement. It seems to me that right reason and judgment, and the most superficial knowledge of human life, are bound to recognize and acknowledge that truth immediately it is pointed out, and no person, speaking purely from the standpoint of experience, could possibly put the matter in better and more accurate form. The entire complex history of mankind is surely one long and painful testimony to the existence and operation of this constitutional and inherent defect in our moral nature. It lies at the root of all the crime and of all the bitter suffering and anguish which disfigure and darken the life of man, and which harass and desolate his soul. It is the cause of that incessant inner strife and conflict which he has to wage from the cradle to the grave.

To speak, therefore, by way of illustration, of the manner in which this moral weakness is apt to display itself in human life, and to adduce evidence in favour of the actual truth of this statement, would be equivalent to stating mere truisms, and to providing the material for a course of ethical sermons. No sane man doubts or can doubt the constitutional perverseness and crookedness of the will, in even the very best and noblest of men, the immense attraction which the unlawful and forbidden things of life present to him, the ease with which a downward moral course is entered upon, and the overwhelming difficulties which lie in the way of right-doing, and of the achieving of moral victories. One may justly say that an inner conflict, consequent upon these tendencies, is being waged within us hour by hour and day by day, and that it never

ceases until we fold our hands and close our eyes in the last sleep of death. The imagination can form some sort of picture of what human life would be, and might be, did this inherent defect in our nature, and, consequently, this incessant inward strife, not exist.

The reality and intensity of this inner conflict in those true to themselves has probably never been so effectively voiced as in the burning words of the Apostle St. Paul:—

"For to will is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good I find not. For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not that I do. Now, if I do that which I will not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[1]

And, of course, it is a mistake to suppose that the lives of educated and cultivated men are free from this constitutional taint, and that it may therefore be regarded as a characteristic of the low and the vulgar, and as the inevitable outcome of environment. Intellectual culture but tends to change the form in which the moral defect displays itself. The

[1] *Romans*, vii. 18 et seq.

educated man has learnt the art of self-control, and of self-restraint. He is more circumspect and diplomatic. He is more effectually hedged in by laws and customs, which govern his social life. He is better able to weigh the consequences which follow upon the yielding to evil inclinations, at least of the baser kind. But that the inclination and tendency exist is evident from the moral catastrophes which occasionally occur in the lives of the greatest and apparently most immaculate of men, and in those self-revelations which prominent and thoughtful men are apt to make to the world from time to time. The great multitude is kept in check, chiefly, by the civil law and by the fear of punishment and consequences. We know from the revolutionary periods of human history, and from what takes place sometimes under our own eyes, what is apt to happen when those laws are in abeyance, and when the natural inclinations of man are allowed to have full play.

To adduce evidence, then, illustrating the fact that by reason of his moral weakness the natural man is greatly attracted and affected by moral evil (even though it be condemned by the higher reason), and that he finds it difficult to resist it and to practise virtue, would almost seem to be a waste of time and of labour. The facts are so obvious that only a person who is utterly blind, and who is perversely so, can ignore and deny them. The vapourings of the shallow optimist, therefore, may safely be dismissed here. The contents of a popular daily paper, the materials out of which almost every

modern novel or romance is constructed, the admitted depraved condition of modern society—indeed, the entire moral traditions of the race, and the bitter hatred of the only religious system calculated to place a curb upon the disordered human will, are conclusive evidence on this point. The rulers in both Church and State, in all countries, are becoming increasingly perplexed on account of the growing evil, and are asking themselves in vain how they are to be remedied. Crime and sinful folly, the lust after money and after sensual gratification, the mad pursuit of ambition and of social distinction, the enslaving of man by his fellow-man, fill the world with the wreckage of human lives and of human hopes, and illustrate the truth of the Apostle's dictum that the "whole creation travaileth and groaneth in pain."

Millions are being squandered in the attempt to reform human character, and in some manner at least, to bind up the wounds from which the world is bleeding to death; but even the unreasoning optimist must admit that human character is not reformed, and that the glaring evils of society are not remedied.

And yet behind all this mass of human sin and folly and wrongdoing, there lies the deep consciousness that the moral law exists, that it is binding upon the conscience, that obedience to it brings happiness and peace and joy, while disobedience to it brings wretchedness and misery and disappointment. How will the optimist or the "new" theo-

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logian, who recklessly dismisses the story of the Fall, explain the strange anomaly? On what lines of reasoning will he account for the problem which thus faces the reflecting mind?

How comes it to pass, I would ask, that the man of good education and of refined instincts, jealous of the honour of wife or of sister, finds it possible to persistently break the moral law, and to live a life of sensuality and of low and debasing pleasures? How is it that he flagrantly breaks the law of which he is the steadfast upholder in his own home? How is it that he comes to violate the confidence of his friend, that he brings ruin and destruction upon an ordered family life, and that he outrages every sense of decency and of right feeling? Will he maintain that he is guided by some law which is different from that which binds other men, or point to some standard of honour, which is peculiarly his own and which he claims to justify to himself? Does he maintain that, for him, the higher moral law which binds the consciences of men, does not exist? It is quite certain that no normally-constituted man will make any such foolish assertions. He will tell you that, while he clearly recognized the law, he lacked the strength to obey it. There was a conflict between his will and his lower passions, and it was by reason of the *weakness of his will* and of the force and strength of his passions that he fell a victim and entered upon the lower way. He is himself fully convinced that he could have resisted and saved his reputation had he energized his will, or

had he, in some measure even, attempted to strengthen it by cultivating virtue. He will oftentimes curse the weakness of will which has brought the trouble upon him.

It is pitiful to think that with the clear facts of life before us, with the tales of sin and of vice, and the consequent moral suffering which the records of human life unfold to us day by day, even the attempt should be made to disguise this palpable truth, and to propose philosophies calculated to aid human nature in deceiving itself. It is preposterous to think that at this hour of the day views of sin, and of responsibility, such as the "New" Theology unfolds to us, can be proposed in all seriousness, and that sober-minded men can be found who will accept them.

That such theologies can at all originate in a human brain is, to my mind, in itself conclusive proof of the Fall of Man, and of the radical disorder prevailing in his moral and intellectual nature.

The disordered and weakened human will is, we are told, *inordinately attached to worldly possessions.* Its natural bent is in the direction of what it can see and touch, and what most effectually ministers to sense-gratification. It finds it difficult, as a consequence, to obey the higher law and to practise the virtue of temperance and resistance. By way of illustrating from the facts of life how intensely true this statement is, I will quote what a learned and observant student of human nature has to say on the subject. His burning words indicate how deep

this attachment of human nature to worldly possession is, how completely it blinds the moral sight, and how outwardly honourable and upright men will, because of it, lose all sense of the proportion of things and become moral monsters. No appeal to reason and to human feeling, no law of God or of man would seem to be effective in diverting them from their course, and the result certainly is a state of things such as the darkest ages of barbarism cannot record, and before which human nature stands apalled and filled with shame.

"How can he (the God-fearing Christian) cope with rivals who have no sense of justice? How can he reconcile himself to the methods which they follow? How can he adopt the practices deemed necessary for success in the modern world? Trade has degenerated into legalized gambling. Honest competition has given place to unscrupulous speculation. Men overreach one another and boast of their cleverness. Fortunes are made and unmade in a few moments, and hundreds of innocent families are reduced to poverty, without appeal or hope of redress; for the author of their misery screens himself behind some legal technicality; and while the petty thief is locked up in a prison cell, the robber of millions builds himself a dwelling which

[1] "Alas," writes one, "for that rich inheritance! In their hands it is like a sharp-edged sword in the hands of a madman —an instrument of ruin and destruction. Even before they have divided it among themselves, it has already divided them from one another. Yesterday they wept together over the bier of their father; to-day they wrangle with one another over his last will and testament. The lust of gold has become too strong for the love of kindred."

outdoes in splendour the palaces of kings. Like the dishonest steward in the Gospel parable, though in a different way, he makes himself 'friends of the mammon of iniquity.' The great ones of the world court his society, and count it an honour to be admitted to his table, or even to cross his threshold and feast their eyes upon the display of his wealth. They admire the architecture of his house, and go into raptures over the decorations of his parlours.

"Poor deluded worldlings! how false is their taste, how complete their moral blindness! They do not see that every stone in that house is stamped with the seal of robbery, that every piece of furniture in these parlours is stained with the blood of the poor. The mutterings of the approaching storm are heard on all sides, in the conflict between capital and labour, and in the general uprising of the masses against the classes. The situation in many lands is so strained that no one can foretell what the morrow may bring. There is, on the one hand, a mad race for gain and an accumulation of immense wealth by the few, and on the other hand, a wretchedness and a thraldom of the multitude but little better than actual slavery. Thousands of heartless masters, valuing only the brawn and muscle of the labourer, look upon him as a living chattel, with which they may do what they choose. They pay him but scant wages, and often compel him to profane with servile work the one day of the week which should be sacred to the service of God and the repose of man. Millions of poor labourers, giving up all hope for time and eternity, lie festering

in dens and hovels, like moral lepers whose presence upon earth breeds social infection and death. Deprived of the helps of religion, and goaded on by despair to join the ever-increasing army of socialists and anarchists, they are ready with torch and brand, with dagger and revolver, to reduce all mankind to their own level of misery and degradation."[1]

"Aversion has taken the place of natural affection; self-interest has made strangers of those who are closely bound to each other by the ties of flesh and blood!"[2]

"Whole armies of human beings are kept slaving day and night to satisfy the extravagant demands of luxury. Held to the large industrial centres, they are forced to toil in noisome factories and workshops for the exclusive advantage of those who idle away a useless existence in perfumed parlours and drawing-rooms."

"In the opinion of an American professor of sociology (Prof. Alsworth Ross, Ph. D.) it is greed that rules our commercial captains. They are never guided by concern for the common welfare. If 'so much per cent. profit' result from an operation, no matter how questionable, there will be multitudes of business men who will readily lend their aid to the enterprise. He instances the reckless destruction of forests, and the ruthless extermination of the whale and the seal in Alaskan waters as results of this commercial greed. When it was remonstrated

[1] Rev. R. J. Meyer, S. J.: *The World in Which We Live.*
[2] Fr. Felix, S. J.: *Le Progrès.*

that in some twenty years both whale and seal would become extinct, and that some native tribes are already starving because their chief means of sustenance is being destroyed, some one replies: 'Yes, it's true, but, you see, we made thirty per cent.'"

"Again, our railroads are annually killing ten thousand and disabling a hundred thousand human beings. Why this terrible holocaust? Because the magnates will not apply the necessary safety precautions. It would mean a reduction of dividends. The same holds good of the street car companies, who refuse to install the much-needed fenders unless compelled by law."

Prof. Ross was once invited to inspect the cooling rooms of a large Chicago packing house. In one of them he found fifteen young women working all day in a deathly chilling atmosphere. The manager explained the beautiful arrangement for increasing and reducing the temperature, and showed how the walls were arranged so as neither to admit unnecessary air nor to dissipate the required heat. "You see," he said, turning to the visitor, "nothing is wasted in this arrangement." "No," replied Mr. Ross, "nothing but the health of the young women."

"It would lead too far to mention all the business methods savouring of savagery that now flourish in the land. Organized exploitation of revenues derived from pandering to man's basest instincts is no longer uncommon. In Chicago alone there are

at present thirty indictments against men participating in the infamous 'white slave' traffic. The glass factories of Indiana and the cotton mills of the South are filled by an army of child workers. The passage of stricter emigration laws is opposed by contractors for cheap labour and by the steamship agencies. When a certain factory manager was told that he was working his men to death, he said: "Lots more where they come from."[1]

I have had abundant and exceptional opportunities of ascertaining that this is not an exaggerated or overdrawn picture of the actual state of things in the commercial world of all civilized lands to-day. On the contrary, it is a condition universally admitted and recognized and mourned over by the few who have the courage to stand aside from this tornado of foulness and corruption which is sweeping the modern world to its doom.

The extraordinary thing about the matter is, of course, the circumstance that the men who commit these legalized crimes are often apparently honourable citizens, who perform their duty to society and the state, and who are rigid in the upholding of the moral law in their own households. They are often affectionate and devoted husbands and fathers and frienus!

Have we not here conclusive evidence of a radically and fundamentally disordered state of the moral nature, and of a condition of soul that no human

[1] From the *Catholic Fortnightly Review*, January, 1909.

science or philosophy can adequately explain, or for which it can hope to find the remedy? Or are these sins, too, as the "new" theologians suggest, "quests for God?"

But it is not necessary to see the truth expounded by the Catholic theologian only in the grosser sins and vices of the world.

"Man, as an animal," says a modern writer (T. W. Allies), "will give his body every indulgence in food and other animal pleasures which he can procure; and, as an animal endued with mind, he will seek no less to satisfy the desires of his mind, such as consist in the acquiring of knowledge and distinction among his fellow-men, power over them, whereby he may make them instruments of his pleasure." The moral result is the new heathenism which is striving everywhere to displace Christianity.

The philosopher or the man of science is generally considered to be pursuing noble and exalted aims in life. He is held to be living in an atmosphere far removed from that of the man of the world in which sensual enjoyment, or the craze for money and power hold sway. He is believed to be moving on those loftier heights which separate him from the grovelling desires of the multitude. But how often, especially in our modern days, is the man of science made to serve the lowest ends, and instead of elevating human nature and of giving it nobler conceptions of God and of the true aim of life, does he become the very handmaid of debasing philosophies which tend to increase and intensify human misery a thousandfold.

In his poem entitled "Despair," Lord Tennyson has graphically depicted what some of the effects of this kind of science and philosophy are upon the weaker ones of our race. Those amongst us whose calling brings them into closer contact with the world of the inner life, and who have some knowledge of what is really going on in human souls, are only too well aware of the havoc and desolation which the bold assertions of some modern philosophers are apt to cause in human hearts, and how difficult it is to repair the moral damage which they have wrought, and which, alas, in too many instances, proves to be wholly beyond repair. They constantly realize how difficult it is to bring consolation to persons in whom the natural powers of right-thinking have been distorted and perverted, and whose constitution has absorbed some poisonous thought or scientific doubt. They know how readily the weakened moral nature of man will assimilate all such unwholesome suggestions and how very easily the soul's balance may be lost. They often realize their helplessness and the apparent inadequacy of their argument, in view of the enticing form in which this modern science presents its case.

It is, however, not of the effects of some of these modern systems of thought that I propose to speak here. What I am asking myself is: How come these negative systems to be entertained at all? How comes it to pass that sober-minded and learned persons who, though they share with us our common human nature, and are consequently aware of what

that human nature always and everywhere postulates, nevertheless draw inferences from their scientific study of man and of nature which are calculated to do such utter violence to it? How is it that they lose sight of our human intuitions, of hopes and desires, so deeply rooted in us that they must be considered part of our very constitution, and that they come to regard them as of less scientific value than their own supposed discoveries and conclusions?

It seems to me that the true solution of this problem is to be found in that other wound of the Fall, which Catholic theologians define as *moral torpor, or sluggishness*, and as a lack of energy to practise virtue and to cultivate and develop the higher powers and possibilities of the soul.

Is it not because of their own great moral weakness, accentuated often by occupation of the mind with one exclusive line of thought and research and by the consequent tendency of the mind to take onesided and distorted views of matters, that some of these extraordinary conclusions are reached? Ordinary persons may be puzzled by the circumstance that science should have so strong a tendency to adopt agnostic views of life, and to destroy confidence in the higher dictates of our nature; but for the psychologist and for the accurately-instructed Christian there should be no difficulty at all about the matter.

Prof. James, in the statement already quoted (p. 42), has hit the nail on the head, and that statement is of surpassing significance and importance.

All accurate knowledge of life goes to confirm and support it. "Relatively few medical and scientific men," he says, "can pray. Few can carry on any living converse with God. . . . Part of the imperfect vitality under which we labour can thus be easily explained. . . . One part of our minds dams up—even damns up—the other part." In other words, we know that we ought to pray and to exercise the higher functions of our nature. But moral weakness and our fascinating pursuit have paralyzed our powers, and as a consequence we are, in spite of all our science, moral and intellectual imbeciles. We see with only one eye, while we have two, and we are, therefore, of necessity blind leaders of the blind. Are we not here face to face with the solution of the problem? Is it not here that we touch the very root and source of all the godless systems of modern scientific and philosophic thought? How far such a one-sided development of human faculty can go, and what grotesque and even blasphemous conclusions it is capable of reaching, is perhaps best illustrated by that series of articles which have recently appeared in the American "Cosmopolitan Review," under the titles: "Blasting at the Rock of Ages," and "Avatars of the Almighty." They are certainly striking testimony to the constitutional disorder and weakness of man's moral nature, and to the sluggishness of the will in exercising itself in the higher and truer direction.

Constituted as we are, there is probably no work in life which is more perilous to the moral nature

than the exclusive pursuit of physical science. It is peculiarly absorbing and fascinating for particular orders of mind, and it has a natural tendency to draw the intellect in one exclusive direction. Persistently engaged with the investigation of secondary causes, the mind is apt to lose sight of the first and necessary Cause, and in the course of time to find the ultimate cause in what it can touch and handle, and what can be observed and traced by the senses.

The weakened will, enslaved by the exclusive pursuit, obeys the promptings of the mind and loses all power of energizing itself in the other and higher direction. It suffers a kind of moral paralysis. For persons who have passed through such mental processes, the other world and its realities have not merely passed out of sight, they have literally ceased to exist, since they have, strictly speaking, no longer a faculty by which they can be apprehended. They have become morally blind and are not unlike those fish of which naturalists tell us and which, having long lived in dark caves to which the sun has no access, have gradually lost the faculty of sight: in whom disuse has ultimately paralyzed the organ. It follows that when such persons come to construct their theories they are bound to draw one-sided and mistaken inferences. The faculties which they employ for that purpose are disordered and stunted. In their interpretation of the universe and its phenomena, they have lost the sense of the proportion of things, and their inward sight is distorted by a moral squint. What they propose for our acceptance, and what they are anxious to impose upon us

as truths, is precisely what we must expect them to propose to us, if the Fall of Man be true and if, as a consequence, the natural mental fabric is faulty and out of gear. Here, too, it is not so much by research and by wearisome scientific controversies that we are likely to get to the root of the matter, but by a study of human nature, as it really is, and as it constantly presents itself to us, in its many-sided and complex manifestations. It is the true psychologist, in fact, who is likely to shed most light upon the subject.

Another characteristic of the wound of our moral nature is declared by the Catholic theologian to be *an inordinate attraction towards sensual pleasures, beyond the requirements of nature and contrary to the dictates of reason.* The bodily appetite by which our sensitive nature is excited and impelled towards its proper objects, is pronounced to be a perverse and inordinate appetite.

"Plato compares the rational soul in man to a charioteer, driving two horses; one horse representing the concupiscible (the desiring or impelling appetite); the other the irascible (the sluggish or hesitating) appetite. He draws a vivid picture of the resistance of the concupiscible part against reason, how madly it rushes after lawless pleasure, and now it is only kept in restraint by main force, again and again applied till gradually it grows submissive. This submissiveness, gradually acquired, is the virtue of temperance. . . . Plato lavishes all evil names on the steed that represents the concupiscible part. But the irascible, the other steed, has

its own fault of shying and turning tail at danger, and needs the goad, as the other needs the rein."[1]

There is agreement, then, evidently, on this point, between the heathen philosopher and the Catholic theologian, and both may well be supposed to have formed their views of the matter by reflection and observation, and from a study of the actual facts of human life, as well as from that of the operations of the soul.

We may reasonably conclude, therefore, that the moral defect here spoken of actually exists, and that the Catholic theologian is stating the facts of human experience, as well as those of Revealed Truth or,—to put it in another form—the conclusions of the heathen philosopher confirm the definitions of the Catholic theologian.

And we may surely assume that the trained Catholic theologian has a right to speak with authority on the subject—a greater right, surely, than any other scientific or philosophic thinker. For not only is he acquainted with the principles of both ancient and modern philosophy, but he has, of necessity, a knowledge of human nature with which the knowledge of all other men cannot possibly compare.

I have never been able to understand how intelligent men can doubt this, and on what grounds it has come to be assumed that the Catholic theologian is hampered, in his definitions, by religious prejudices and pre-suppositions.

[1] Rickaby: *Moral Philosophy.*

The Catholic Church has the unique advantage of having been on the scenes for nearly twenty centuries, and her opportunities of studying and knowing human nature have been and are greater than those of any other moral or spiritual organization which is in existence and which can be conceived. She not only received the original deposit of Divine Truth from her Founder, but she has, in every age, examined and dealt with every form of thought which the speculative human intellect has proposed against the integrity of that deposit. She is acquainted with every philosophy which has attempted to mutilate or to modify it. She knows all the possibilities of the human intellect in this respect.

But she also knows what is really going on in the inmost depths of the human heart: its deep moral convictions and certitudes on the one hand, its cravings and appetites and inconsistencies and, consequently, its incessant inward struggles and conflicts, on the other. To her keeping have not only been committed the oracles of God, but also those manifestations of conscience by which those oracles can alone be understood and correctly interpreted, and by which their divine origin and character are confirmed.

The philosopher or the man of science or the non-Catholic theologian has not and cannot have any such knowledge; he is bound to judge matters from a purely conventional and abstract point of view, or possibly by the dicta of his own impaired mental and moral faculties. And his deliverances cannot,

therefore, be of the same weight and value as those of the Catholic priest.

It is difficult to understand how this fact has come to be overlooked by our modern thinkers, and how they can imagine that they can form accurate views on the great verities of religion by abstract thought and historical research, and in the comfortable repose of their study chairs.

The great multitude, of course, simply echo the notions and misconceptions on this subject which are current, and which they have imbibed with their mothers' milk; from really thoughtful men, however, who take these matters seriously, one might surely expect better things.

In the sphere of Revealed Truth, God has nowhere left Himself without a witness, and it is to the examination of that witness, as well as to the Revealed Truth itself, that the trained Catholic theologian addresses himself. In the matter of the inner life all men are apt to be actors and sometimes very expert deceivers, and it is not too much to say that in many respects it is only the intelligent confessor who ever gets to know the whole and real truth about us.

But, however that may be, the truth expressed in this theological definition will be universally acknowledged and admitted. The experience of life abundantly confirms it. There is, in every sphere of life, an unreasonable and wholly disproportionate pursuit of pleasure. I am taking the word as meaning sense-gratification of every kind, beyond the requirements

of nature and contrary to the dictates of reason. And I shall not refer to those lowest manifestations of human passion, in which the natural appetite has become debased and perverted, and where gratification has become an end instead of a means to an end. It is not necessary, as some seem to imagine, to seek for evidence of the Fall of Man in the lives of the lowest and the brutalized of mankind. It is in every sphere of human life, and in every condition of culture and education, that we can trace that evidence. For manifold and varied are the forms in which man exhibits the constitutional flaw in his moral nature, and by which he manifests his fallen state and his forgetfulness of the obligations and of the real purpose of life.

The man of leisure, who seems to exist chiefly to consume food and to eat the honey gathered by another's industry, rides and shoots to kill time and to satisfy his cravings; or he incessantly plays games—cards or billiards or golf, as the case may be, and these evidently constitute for him the end and aim of existence. They are the exclusive subject of his conversation and they occupy his thoughts by day and his dreams by night. He cannot understand how any intelligent person can fail to be equally interested. His happiness lies in their ceaseless and uninterrupted pursuit. Other claims and considerations are simply "bores" to him, and they are not on any account to be entertained.

In the case of the modern woman of means we have a similar display of misdirected energy, of a

life not guided by the dictates of reason, but by the impulse of passion.

"Three months of revel amid pleasures and amusements, banquets and dances, shows and entertainments! . . . Three months to restore in the sea breeze, or to strengthen in the surf, the health that has been broken down by the strain of worldly excitement, or weakened by the relaxing atmosphere of sensual enjoyment! Three months more, to seek, like birds fleeing before the north wind, for warmer suns and softer climes! Some intervals between to ensconce one's self at home without doing anything in particular, unless it be to rock one's laziness in luxurious ease. . . . Such is the orbit in which the life of many human beings nowadays performs its annual revolution."[1]

But it is not only the wealthy unemployed who thus madly and incontinently race after sense-pleasure. The craving has taken possession of every class and sphere of life and society, and each succeeding year shows some new phase of this insane development. Indeed the financial exploiters of this human infirmity have to strain every nerve in order to satisfy the ever-increasing want, and to provide adequate variety. One after another luxurious buildings, in which the senses of sight and of taste and of hearing can be excited and gratified, grow up in our midst, and each new erection eclipses the preceding one by the splendour of its attractions and appointments. Streams of human beings,

[1] Fr. Felix, S. J.: *Le Progrès.*

determined to amuse themselves and to still their cravings, pass along our streets and avenues, turning night into day, and working hard to chase away any and every serious thought that may by any chance happen to stray into the soul. Numbers of educated men and women, young and old, are content to stand long hours in the open street—yea, on bitter cold nights, too—willing to risk health and life rather than forego an evening's artificial and artificially-produced happiness.

For no kind of serious aim or purpose would they and do they make the same sacrifice; no high or noble end of life evokes the same persistent display of energy and determination. What one asks one's self is: What must be the social and moral effect of this incessant sense-gratification, this persistent effort to forget and to banish from the mind the serious and higher considerations of life? What must the homes and households be like from which their members so consistently absent themselves? What views of life and of duty must the younger members and the children in such households be forming? These reflections are surely not the speculations of a pessimist, whose religious convictions are calculated to make him take morbid and gloomy views of matters; they are reflections which must force themselves upon every thoughtful mind, and they are certainly increasingly occupying the minds of our rulers in Church and State.

No well-ordered social or domestic life can possibly exist under such conditions, and no true spiritual

life and serious purpose can be cultivated in such an atmosphere. It is an atmosphere of dissipation and of unwholesome distraction, in which there grow up ideas of life which utterly unfit the unformed mind for its nobler and higher aims and responsibilities. And by reason of the disorder of our nature, the appetite for these distractions and gratifications grows by what it feeds upon, and after a time all the ordinary duties of life become distasteful and unattractive. They are either performed in a half-hearted way, or not performed at all.

For even those sensible pleasures, not bad in themselves, are often very dangerous. "For unless we are on our guard," says St. Augustine, "we shall be carried away by our evil inclinations, and shall soil our souls with everything that is beautiful to the eye, sweet to the taste, harmonious to the ear, fragrant to the smell and soft to the touch. So that we may apply to ourselves the words of the prophet: 'Death is come up through our windows.'"

The clearer and keener intellects of our time are fully alive to the social dangers which attend this development. They fully realize that modern society has entered upon a state of anarchy and decadence, which makes them look with grave misgivings towards the immediate future. What will be left of the family-life, they ask, when the woman-movement shall have reached its fullest development and when, as in some Continental cities, entire families will be found spending all their leisure time in theatres and restaurants? But the

question is: What is to be done? By what means are right and wholesome conceptions of life to be restored? How is distracted human nature to be brought to its senses?

It is urged that our modern social and economic conditions of life are largely responsible for this state of things. Thousands of struggling men and women know of no other means of relieving the deadening monotony of their lives, and of alleviating the moral and physical suffering which they entail. It is after all but outraged human nature which is thus revenging and compensating itself.

But this is surely one of those fatal delusions, by which poor fallen human nature is too apt to deceive itself, and by which it seeks to hide from itself some great but inconvenient truth.

No sane man would deny the rightly-proportioned use and value of change, recreation, and amusement; especially under the existing and depressing conditions of life. But what has this to do with that craving for excitement, that debasing sense-gratification, which is indulged in at the expense of health, of money, and of moral integrity, and which, in its effects, is nothing less than a dangerous and deadly disease? Both moralists and statesmen have declared it to be the curse of any people and age. It had probably reached its fullest development in the Roman empire at the time immediately preceding its fall, and it was certainly largely instrumental in accelerating that fall. What rational man has ever found that such gratification really helps him per-

manently to bear the burdens of life, or that it enables him courageously to take up its daily duties? It is, at best, but a kind of narcotic, by which a condition of temporary forgetfulness is induced, and by which reason is stupefied so that it loses the power of rightly reflecting upon, and of lawfully meeting the problems and difficulties of life. That such a temporary effect is produced few of us will be disposed to doubt, but what is apt to be forgotten is the inevitable after-condition which makes itself felt when this effect of the narcotic wears off, when the monotonous duties of life have to be faced afresh, and when the bright but false dream-world in which the mind lived for a time, vanishes away. Is it not then that life wears a gloomier aspect than ever, and that the daily round of duty appears still more irksome, while the enervated will is less disposed than before to face life's burdens and graver responsibilities? Is not the experience of life constantly demonstrating the fallacy which underlies the world's plausible arguments and sophistries?

Indulgence in incessant sense-pleasures beyond doubt weakens the will and incapacitates it for noble endeavour and strenuous effort. It sears the conscience and creates that condition of soul in which spiritual realities become mere abstractions. "It creates, moreover, such an irresistible tendency to sin, such a successful encouragement of it, such a genial climate, such a collection of favourable circumstances, such an amazing capability of sin, that it breeds actual sin, regularly formed and with all

the theological requirements, by millions and millions."[1]

The man of pleasure is, by common consent, the weakling of the world. He bears the marks of his moral infirmity in his face, and displays them in his demeanour, and upon him all men of character look with pity and contempt. St. Augustine rightly says that the occupations of life which are not ultimately directed towards God are nothing but games—indications that life is being wasted.

That all sense-indulgence and the so-called pleasures of the world produce a condition of internal desolation and emptiness is evidence, surely, that the world's methods are mistaken ones, and that the trouble lies deeper by far than the world would have us suppose. It is proof positive, it seems to me, that man is, by these pursuits and gratifications, running counter to the higher and truer dictates of his nature, and that he is in a real sense at war with himself. And this again demonstrates the constitutional disorder of his nature and the truth of the Church's teaching.

We find sometimes in the writings of men who have tasted largely of the world's joys and delights, or who have a very accurate knowledge of human character, striking acknowledgments of this inward desolation and emptiness, consequent upon mere sense-gratification.

"I will say nothing," wrote Goethe, in 1824, "against the course of my existence; but, at bottom,

[1] Father Faber.

it has been nothing but pain and burden, and I can affirm that during the whole of my seventy-five years I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being. It is but the perpetual rolling of a rock, that must be raised up again forever."

"Take the happiest man," writes Prof. William James,[1] "and the one most envied by the world, and in nine cases out of ten, his inmost consciousness is one of failure. Either his ideals in the line of his achievements are pitched far higher than the achievements themselves, or else he has secret ideals of which the world knows nothing, and in regard to which he inwardly knows himself to be found wanting."

With these plain facts of life before us it is indeed difficult to sympathize with a theology or philosophy of life, which, in order to escape an unwelcome and unpalatable conclusion, suggests solutions that are in flagrant contradiction to the simple and universal experiences of mankind, and that can only be constructed on the basis of a false method of reasoning, and of a deliberate misinterpretation of those experiences. The mischief which results from an acceptance of such philosophies is practically incalculable. It consists not merely in creating a state of fatal self-deception and self-delusion, which is pitiable enough in itself, but it shuts the soul out from those aids and means of grace by which alone the disturbed balance can be adjusted and by which the disorder can be cured.

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

It is admittedly a fatal thing for a sick man to fall into the hands of an imperfectly-instructed physician, or of one who is a crank, or who has strayed into some perilous by-path of medical knowledge. Such a physician is very apt to make a wrong diagnosis of the case before him, and to subject his patient to a mistaken and mischievous form of treatment. His mistaken diagnosis, in any case, must necessarily cut the patient off from the only kind of treatment which is calculated to cure him. We are unhappily, in this modern age, suffering from a very army of quack doctors, and of pseudo-physicians of the soul, whose patent remedies for the world's moral ills are carrying desolation and misery in their train, and who are becoming a veritable danger to society. They are trying to cure the soul's fatal disease by telling the world that it does not exist, or that it is but the inevitable outcome of some normal and natural upward striving, incidental to the moral and physical evolution of the race. It is largely to them and to their plausible writings that the present hopeless confusion of religious thought, and the moral evils necessarily resulting from them, are due. In order to please their patients and to save them pain, they plaster over their moral wounds, rather than cleanse and purify them, and thus ultimately heal them.

I am persuaded that those wounds will never be healed, until men will learn to become true to themselves, and instead of resorting to a hundred patent remedies, they will make quite sure that the diagnosis of their trouble is correct—until they will clearly recognize for themselves what is the real

character and cause of the deadly disease from which they are suffering.

Once before in the history of the world man stood face to face with this terrible problem. A great empire was tottering to its fall. Human perverseness had reached a maximum of development. Vice had become virtue, and sensuality and self-indulgence had passed beyond all reasonable bounds. The deadly disease of the soul had eaten its way into the very life-forces of the people and was fast destroying them. The vice-enslaved will had lost all power of asserting and of energizing itself. It lay a helpless captive amidst the ruins of universal social and moral decay. In writings like those of Ovid and of Juvenal we have vivid descriptions of the state of things existing in ancient Rome before its fall, and they are almost beyond belief.

The world of that day, too, had its philosophic thinkers, who were deeply conscious that something was radically wrong, and who indulged in vague speculations as to the cause of that wrongness. In their various systems of thought they attempted to solve the problem and to suggest remedies. Some of the nobler spirits, gifted with a kind of prophetic insight, came very near to the recognition of the truth, and of the real nature of the malady. But they all failed in making their voices heard. Indeed philosophic thought itself became a form of sensual delight and a means of finding relief from that tædium vitæ, which follows in the train of sensual debauch. Their words fell upon deaf ears, for they

contained mere half-truths ; they were mere gropings after the light. They failed to move hearts which had become utterly depraved and hardened. What was it that then introduced a principle of life into this dying world and that made it possible for human nature to recover itself and to come to its senses ?

It was the teaching of One Who told the world the real truth about the matter, and Who told it in such an effective and convincing way that the world was compelled to pause and to listen, and that its choicer spirits were led ultimately to accept and embrace it. He held up before men a mirror in which they could see themselves as they really were, and which made it possible for them to diagnose the true nature of the disease from which they were suffering. He led them to self-knowledge, and upon that self-knowledge He constructed His system of reform and of moral and spiritual regeneration. By His burning words of truth He awakened in men the dormant energies of their moral nature, and He turned those energies in the right and God-ward direction. He showed them where alone the true remedy for the world's moral ills was to be found. His system ran counter to all the philosophic systems of the day. It was so humiliating to the pride and sense-enslaved soul, that it encountered the fiercest opposition, and was combated, even by those who, in a measure, had anticipated it and who might have been expected to become its most ardent supporters. But so forcible and incisive was its logic, so clearly did it show the utter worthlessness

of all merely human remedies, that it ultimately found entrance into even the hardest heart, and that an entire world came to seek from God that healing virtue which it had vainly sought in the resources of human nature. That human nature was conquered and convinced by the moral miracles which took place before its eyes. It was the divine system of the Divine Christ which finally conquered the world and regenerated it.

There have been those since His time who have laid their hands upon this divine system. They have tried to modify it and to improve upon it, and to reconcile it with what they conceive to be the claims and dictates of human reason. In their foolish pride they have again and again attempted to escape from or to circumvent its humiliating terms, and to substitute for it remedies which they could examine and analyze, and which were more in accordance with their own notions of healing and of treatment.

But experience has shown that all such attempts have always and everywhere proved the most dismal failures. They have gained for them some temporary victories, perhaps, and have been the means of sustaining some passing tendency of thought, but they have neither cured the moral sickness of man, nor awakened the dormant energies of his soul. They have left the root of the matter untouched. It is the original divine remedy alone, in its pure and undiluted and supernatural form, that has always and everywhere accomplished these things.

The entire history of the Catholic Church proclaims this fact; the hopeless, chaotic state of the non-Catholic world to-day abundantly demonstrates it.

I maintain then, that in view of all the facts of the case, it is on these lines that the perplexing problem of these modern days is likely to be solved. It is in this direction that we must look for the real disease from which man is suffering, and for its remedy. We must come back to self-knowledge. We must once more fully and unhesitatingly discern and acknowledge what we are "as we naturally stand," and in the light of that knowledge we must view the world and the phenomena of human life. We must become true to ourselves, and rigidly reject those systems of thought which would lead us to deny or to distort the accuracy of our instinctive moral perceptions and the facts of life, and which reflect our souls in a clouded and blurred mirror. We must freely and fully confess that, cultivated and progressive though we be, our moral nature is fatally diseased and out of order, and that there is no effective and permanent healing in mere human remedies. We must recognize, humiliating though the recognition may be, that the doctrine of the Fall, of the bent and crooked will of man, of his inherited weakness and moral perverseness, alone and adequately explains all the facts of the case.

We must return to the simple truth, as our moral nature proclaims it, as prophet and psalmist dimly and vaguely discerned it, as Christ clearly and un-

compromisingly taught it, and as the great Historic Church has preserved and formulated it. "We had in ourselves," writes the Apostle St. Paul, "the answer of death, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God Who raiseth the dead."[1]

[1] II. Cor., i. 9.

THE FALL OF MAN

(C)

The doctrine of the devil and modern thought : the mistakes of liberal theology ; of science ; the facts of experience—Results of modern psychical research : existence of spirit-agencies admitted—Attempted reconstruction of Christian thought—Question of the nature of spirit-agencies discussed—Preconceptions of Science—Anti-Catholic teaching of the spirits—Their failure to establish identity—Their contradictory teaching—Their influence upon mankind—Their tricks and deceptions—Facts, experiences, and testimonies—Fallacies of spiritistic reasoning—True interpretation of the phenomena—The Catholic doctrine confirmed.

A further effect of the Fall is **the devil's dominion over the human race.** (St. Peter says: "By whom man is overcome, of the same also he is a slave," II. Peter ii. 19.)

"Now, man, by his transgression, allowed himself to be seduced and overcome by the evil spirit. This dominion consists in the power of demons to tempt us by obsessing our bodies (as has been explained in treating of the angels), *i.e.:* by obsession to molest and vex man in divers ways, and by possession violently and despotically to turn his victim into a tool or instrument, through which he produces very strange and startling effects."

Whatever modern thought may have to say respecting this difficult and complex subject, all reasonable men will admit that the doctrine of the existence and personality of the spirit of evil is a necessary and integral part of the Christian Revelation. One has but to study the dialectical tricks to which the "new" theologians and critics of the Scriptures have to resort with a view to getting rid of this more than inconvenient doctrine, in order to realize the difficulty of their task, and the extent to which this doctrine is bound up with the entire system of Christian thought. The unprejudiced mind cannot fail to emerge from such a study with a deep conviction that this task must ever prove a hopeless one, since the difficulties which are thus being created must be seen to be far greater than those which it is attempted to solve.

What Christ taught throughout the entire course of His ministry, and what is echoed in the teachings of the Apostles and of Saints and Doctors is, that an individual malevolent power, ruling over a world of evil and of spiritual darkness, and capable of moving the human will, and of influencing the human character, and having for his ultimate aim the moral ruin of mankind, is engaged in a subtle but persistent and never-ceasing conflict with the world of goodness and of truth.

This, in simple language, is the orthodox doctrine of the devil, which has been the belief of the Christian world for centuries, and without which

the statements of Christ, contained in the Sacred Writings, are simply unintelligible.

That this unpalatable and "unscientific" doctrine should be assailed and denied in the present day, and that by those especially appointed to expound it, need not cause any astonishment to reflecting persons. An age which dissolves the Personal God into a mere abstraction and which denies the supremacy of the human conscience can scarcely be expected to believe in the existence and personality of the evil one. "Neither truth," as a writer very forcibly observes, "is compatible with a refusal to recognize the Christian idea of sin," and that idea has to be got rid of at any cost.

There can be no doubt that modern non-Catholic theology is chiefly responsible for this attitude of mind. Its chief characteristic is a readiness to adapt itself to the downward religious tendencies of the age, and to furnish the "enlightened" modern mind with apparently good and plausible reasons for disposing of the uncomfortable and less convenient truths of Revelation. And it does its work in a very subtle and cautious way.

The accuracy of the Biblical statements, referring to the existence and action of a personal power of evil are, for the most part, freely admitted. The evidence is too strong to permit of an attack on the doctrine from this point of view. It is to the *interpretation* of these statements to which our modern Protestant theologians have applied themselves, and upon which they have shed the light of their science

and of their fuller knowledge of ancient religious beliefs and conceptions.

It is urged that belief in a second personal power in the universe, opposing himself to the Supreme Creator and gaining, it would seem, in a thousand instances, a complete victory over Him, involves philosophical difficulties of an insuperable character. It seems so much more probable, they reason, that the satan of the Scriptures is a creature of man's own imagination, who, born in the childhood of the human race, has fed and nourished himself on man's natural fears and ignorances, and has, on utterly false pretences, attained to his present disproportionate and abnormal dimensions. And may it not be reasonably assumed, they argue, that Christ, knowing the force and persistence of inherited ideas and beliefs, and the impossibility of effacing them during the few short years of His ministry, accommodated His teaching to the age in which He lived, and the people whom He taught, and that He would give a very different account of the matter were He to appear in our own age and witness our intellectual progress and our higher moral development ?

Thus modern theology traces for us the natural history of the devil, from his very cradle through the New Testament days and the "dark ages" of the Catholic Church, right up to our own time, and is at this moment busily engaged in digging his grave and in burying him out of sight.

It is very interesting to observe how rapidly a destructive critical process of this kind advances on

its course, and with what eagerness the mind seizes upon any theory, however shallow and inconsistent, which is at all likely to free it from the irksome restraints of an unwelcome and inconvenient truth. And it is difficult to see how any religious truth could ultimately withstand the force of such methods of reasoning. The doctrine of hell and of punishment abolished, it was but natural that the doctrine of the personal devil should follow suit, and after that, who will be ignorant and foolish enough to believe what Christ said about sin and about the soul's responsibility before God?

But will this modern method of explaining away the deeper mystic element of the Christian teaching permanently satisfy really careful and consistent thinkers? Will it suffice to answer those deeper questions which the inexplicable phenomena of the moral life and of conscience are so apt to awaken in the mind? With the removal of the devil as a dogmatic truth, will the shadow of the evil one and of his evil world, also be removed from the pathway of human life? Will human experience ultimately endorse the reasonings of the "New" Theology?

It is sometimes forgotten that there are truths which the awakened spiritual nature of man discerns quite independently of the dicta of any theologian, and that there is a sphere in which even the devil does not leave himself without a witness.[1]

[1] I am quoting in substance what I wrote on this subject some years ago.

From a true philosophical point of view it is certain that the doctrine of the personal devil remains the only rational and intelligible solution of the mystery of evil, as we know it to be at work in the world and in mankind, and that it is a doctrine which best and most adequately explains many of the extraordinary psychic phenomena by which we are confronted in our own day. It is certainly only in the light of this much-abused doctrine that we can understand the fearful disorder which reigns in the moral universe.

A very suggestive writer has given expression to this thought in an exceedingly interesting work entitled: "Evil and Evolution." It is an attempt to turn the light of modern science on the ancient mystery of evil, and the conclusions at which this author arrives are wholly in favour of the constant teaching of the Catholic Church. He points out that of the three possible theories respecting the origin of evil, that of the Sacred Scriptures is, beyond doubt, the best and the most reasonable one. "Assume," he says, "that the Creator had an absolutely perfect scheme, vast and intricate beyond all human thought, beautifully harmonized, delicately poised and adjusted down to its most minute detail, and all for the health and happiness of countless generations of life, and assume that a malignant intelligence brings all the resources of his malignity and intellect to the task of disturbing that nicety of balance and adjustment, and in the world around us you have exactly what might be expected." Or, at another place: "What I am now trying to

show is, that we are surrounded by manifestions of evil which there is no possibility of reconciling with any Providential Government that is at the same time absolute in wisdom and goodness, and almighty in power, and that none of the orthodox solutions of the riddle can be accepted, except the most orthodox of them all, the actual existence of satan." And "if you admit," he says, "the creative power and the beneficence of God, I cannot, for the life of me, see why you may not admit the possibility of the existence, the power, and the malevolence of a devil, and I maintain that all the probabilities are in favour of the assumption that the maladjustments in the scheme of creation are due to the agency of satan, and are in no way to be ascribed either to the indifference or the inefficiency, or, worse than all, to the deliberate purpose of the Creator. That there is a conflict between good and evil raging all around us and within us, is only too evident."

"In the blindness of optimism," he continues, "they are preaching a God of goodness and gentleness and love, while the real god that (their) science seems to be more and more revealing, is that horrid nightmare, the god of evolution, whose schemes have been drawn in lines of blood and tears, to whom nations are but dust beneath his feet, whose trusty ministers are war and pestilence and famine, whose laws are pitiless as death, and as irresistible as the storm."

It is impossible to doubt that these sentiments will be echoed by numbers of really thoughtful but

distressed minds, who have found themselves face to face with this terrible problem, and who have not been able to escape the dreadful alternative here pointed out. Our unorthodox teachers, who are determined, at all costs, to reconcile religion with natural science, as they understand it, cannot be aware of the fearful moral difficulties in which they involve earnest thinkers, and they certainly do not follow their shallow and flimsy theories to their legitimate conclusion. They are, by their method, fast destroying any intelligent and consistent belief in the existence and action of a beneficent Creator. They cannot or will not see "that to eliminate satan is to make the moral chaos around us more chaotic, the darkness more impenetrable, the great riddle of the universe more hopelessly insoluble."

And it is certain that in this matter, too, the constant inward experience of man will have to have its say, and it may be very seriously doubted whether it will, when rightly questioned, endorse the accuracy of such teaching. The deep inward sense of the reality and personality of an external power, playing upon the weakness of our nature produced by the Fall, is too strong and universal to be thus easily set aside.

"These temptations to do and think evil," writes a thoughtful Anglican clergyman, "come back to men's minds with such persistence, in spite of the efforts to exclude them, as to be in themselves one of the greatest proofs of the personality of the

power of evil. The process of their sanctification is ever impeded by evil influences from outside. It is no exaggeration to say that some of the greatest saints have at times, when living the purest lives of self-discipline and prayer, felt within their minds the recurrence of trains of evil thoughts which their regenerate natures abhorred, thus clearly showing the external personal nature of evil."[1]

But it is impossible to enter into this subject at fuller length here. A separate volume would have to be written were one to deal with this matter as fully and as adequately as its immense importance demands. I would refer the reader for fuller information on the subject to the works of our accredited Catholic theologians.

It is chiefly to the second clause of the Church's definition to which I propose to address myself, and respecting which I propose to present and to examine all the evidence which we possess at the present time.

"*This dominion,*" expounds the Church, "*consists in the power of demons to tempt us; . . . by obsession to molest and vex man in divers ways and, by possession, violently and despotically to turn his victim into a tool or instrument, through which he produces very strange and startling effects.*"

It is a most remarkable circumstance that, concurrently with the modern school of destructive theology, there has arisen a movement of thought which is tending in a very different and indeed

[1] Rev. F. D. Bruce, *Man's Spiritual Enemies.*

opposite direction. This movement has now been going on for a considerable number of years. It counts amongst its adherents some of the most prominent men in science and in literature, and it is beginning to permeate almost all classes and conditions of society. Its origin is due to the systematic study and observation of abnormal psychical phenomena, and to the consequent "discovery" of the existence and action upon us of an unseen spiritual universe. The phenomena themselves are now too well known to call for any detailed description. They are, moreover, so complex and many-sided in their character, that any such description, if it is to be adequate, would require the writing of a separate volume. I have devoted many years of careful study to this subject, in many lands, and the reader will find the matter fully dealt with in my two volumes: *The Dangers of Spiritualism*, and *Modern Spiritism: a Critical Examination etc.* For my present purpose, it is sufficient to show that prolonged and painstaking research has shown many of these phenomena to be objective in their character and to be due to the action of extraneous spirit-intelligence or intelligences. Indeed, so exceptionally strong is the evidence which we possess to-day in favour of this conclusion, that to refuse credence can no longer be regarded as a sign of superior intelligence, but as one of being very imperfectly and inaccurately informed. The recent experiments in Italy, made by scientific men of European reputation, have eliminated any remaining element of doubt, even in the scientific mind,

since both the photographic camera and specially constructed instruments have left permanent record of the occurrence of the phenomena. "The results were very favourable," writes Dr. Botazzi, professor of physics in Naples, "because they eliminated the slightest trace of suspicion or uncertainty relative to their genuineness. We obtained the same kind of assurance as that which we have concerning physical, chemical, or physiological phenomena. Henceforth sceptics can only deny the facts by accusing us of fraud and charlatanism." And these scientific utterances are but confirmations of what humbler investigators, in all parts of the world, and of all nations and races, have everywhere and unanimously affirmed, long before the scientific mind deigned to address itself to a study of the subject, and before the Society for Psychical Research existed.

That a few savants, with their as yet very imperfect knowledge of the subject, should, while admitting the objectivity of the phenomena, entertain some doubts as to whether the intelligence directing them is an extraneous one or not, cannot cause us any surprise. The materialistic atmosphere in which some of these men have been brought up, and within which they have pursued their studies, is so dense, and the phenomena themselves are so staggering to their reason, and so destructive of their favourite theories, and, as a consequence, of their life's work, that we can scarcely expect them to make an unconditional surrender. The mind, long held in bondage by a deep and fundamental miscon-

ception, cannot be expected to disentangle itself all at once, and without some trouble. And a little moral courage, too, is needed in order to make an intellectual surrender of this kind. We must, therefore, be content, a little while longer, to watch their struggles with these perplexing manifestations, and to endure with patience the intellectual gymnastics by which they are seeking to escape self-evident conclusions, and to save themselves. We must endure their quaint theories and their word-jugglings, their misty speculations as to the possibilities of the subconscious, of the "astral" substance, and of the "psychodynamic" activities of the human organism.

It may be doubted whether the coiners of some of these terms have any intelligent notion themselves as to what they precisely mean by them, seeing that these terms, at best, merely suggest methods by which the intelligence may be conceived to be acting, but offer no explanation whatever as to the nature and source of the intelligence itself. We can afford to sympathize with these men. Their present path is an uncomfortable and thorny one, we admit, and it is for them full of mirages and of intellectual pitfalls. We have to bear in mind that many before them have trodden the same path, and have struggled in the same entanglements, but have in the end found it to be their way to Damascus. We know full well what the inevitable ultimate result is bound to be.

The most experienced of psychical researchers have long ago reached the conclusion indicated, and

have made their public and full confession of Faith. I will not here quote the familiar names of Sir William Crookes and of Prof. Wallace, and of other earlier researchers. It is often urged as an objection to their conclusions, that it is many years since they conducted their experiments, and that since then so many facts have come to light of which they could not have taken account. I will, therefore, adduce the evidence of the most recent of psychical investigators, and thus bring the subject quite up-to-date.

Prof. Lombroso, who has not only had exceptional opportunites of studying psychical phenomena, but whose standing as an expert in abnormal mental manifestations, lends exceptional weight to the force of his testimony, wrote in the *Grand Magazine*, of February, 1907, as follows: "It was to be proved to me that nothing in our present stock of knowledge is capable of furnishing a true explanation. . . . It was only subsequent to these occurrences, and after séances in which Eusapia, in a state of trance, gave perfectly intelligible and even intellectual answers in languages such as English, of which she had no personal knowledge, and in which she suddenly produced modelled bas-reliefs, impossible to produce instantly in normal conditions, especially in an uneducated person of her description, . . . that I felt myself compelled to yield to the conviction that spiritualistic phenomena, if due in great part to the influence of the medium, are likewise attributable to the influence of *extra terrestrial existences*, which may, perhaps, be com-

pared to the radio-activity which still persists in tubes, after the radium which originated them has disappeared."[1]

Dr. Joseph Venzano, an Italian physician, unanimously admitted to be a careful and painstaking observer, and constantly associated with the Italian scientists in their researches, sums up his own conclusions in the following significant words: "We see then, that for the execution of these manifestations, a fresh personality and a fresh will must have intervened, independent of our own, and in manifest opposition to the will of the medium; a will, the genesis of which is unknown to us, and for which, as we do not wish to overstep the limits of admitted scientific possibility, we abandon the search."[2]

Both American and English students of the subject are acquainted with the writings of Mr. Hereward Carrington, who has long been connected with Prof. Hyslop and Psychical Research, and whose works testify to his intellectual acumen and to his cautious and critical method of weighing evidence. But his scepticism, too, has had to surrender before the incontrovertible facts. In his recent work, *The Coming Science*, he writes: "One other strong reason for believing the spiritistic theory to be correct is found in the fact that, in many cases, messages have been given through one

[1] A few days after the first edition of this book went to press Professor Lombroso's work, *After Death ; what ?* was published. It contains a full account of his exhaustive researches.

[2] *Annals*, Sept., 1907.

medium and broken off, while incomplete, and afterwards finished through another medium, in a different part of the country, or even in a different country. For example, in the case of the late F. W. H. Myers, a message was given through a private medium in England—a lady, and a teacher in Cambridge University—and finished three days later through Mrs. Piper, in Boston, the spirit coming back with the remark: 'I am afraid I did not make myself clear three days ago with reference to so-and-so; what I meant was this: . . . ' and the message was completed in more intelligible form."

Mr. W. F. Barrett, professor of Experimental Physics in the Royal College of Science, in Ireland, past president of the Society for Psychical Research, and associated with that society since its foundation in 1887, in his recently published work (*On the Threshold of a New World of Thought:* an examination of the phenomena of Spiritualism), makes the following emphatic assertion: All that I am prepared to assert, from my own experience, is, that neither hallucination, imposture, mal-observation, mis-description, nor any other well-recognized cause can account for the phenomena I have witnessed, and that the simplest explanation is the spirit-hypothesis."

It will be seen from these testimonies that in the inner and accurately-informed circle of scientific research, a definite conclusion has been reached, whatever views the outer circle of half or misin-

formed persons may still be pleased to hold about the matter. And they are conclusions which some of us reached many years ago, independently of the Psychical Society, and which thousands of "unscientific" people, of every nation, held firmly when science was wrapped in its materialistic slumber, and when a world was being misled by its dicta. What amazes the attentive observer is the astonishing ease with which some of these scientific men pass over into the spiritistic camp, and the arrogance which characterizes their statements,—the utter absence of anything approaching humility and of the confession of serious and far-reaching mistakes. One would imagine, from their sensational statements, that it was really reserved for physical science to *discover* the spiritual world, and that it is the modern savant who has found the means of making connection with it. Not a word of apology to the great Historic Church which, since the coming of Christ, in every age and in the face of the most hostile scientific opposition, has stood for the defence of that truth and has insisted upon its immense significance and importance. Not a word in exoneration of those humble and "unscientific" men who have withstood the fiercest assaults of a false materialistic creed, and who have been content to be looked upon as the fools and the ignorant of mankind.

So far from acknowledging that the Church has been right in her teaching respecting this great subject, and that the most recent ascertainments are strikingly exhibiting the fallacies of physical science

and that it is therefore just possible that she may also be found to be correct in her *interpretation* of the phenomena in question, these apostles of the new cult are already telling her what that interpretation must be, and what the relation is in which these phenomena stand to Christian thought. They are "re-constructing" for her her theology, so that it may be seen to fit in with that interpretation. And, as a consequence, they are increasing the confusion of religious thought already existing in the world a thousandfold, and are creating the most hopeless perplexity in vast numbers of human hearts. They are vaguely prophesying the now fast approaching reconciliation between Christianity and science, and pointing to a time when the long conflict between the two will be happily ended, and when the lion will at length lie down peacefully with the lamb. And, in spite of all the experiences of the past, they find numerous persons again ready to believe and to follow them. But to the more cautious student of the matter it is only too evident, that a grave danger lurks behind these plausible theories and "re-constructions," and that it is only too probable that when the promised compromise shall have been effected, and peace proclaimed, the lamb will be found to be inside the lion, and not beside it. That which makes Christianity what it is, its essential truths and principles, will have been "re-constructed" away. That the Catholic Church, which has been so much longer on the scenes than this new science, and which, from her contact with the various races of mankind, may reasonably be

supposed to have a fuller and more accurate knowledge of the subject, may also be right in her estimation of the value and meaning of the phenomena in question, does not seem to enter the minds of these modern scientific evangelists. With the most imperfect and one-sided knowledge of the matter, they are quite as ready to create new theories, and to expound them with plausibility, as they are to abandon old ones.

Some time ago, Sir Oliver Lodge startled the English-speaking world with the statement that the wall which may be conceived to be dividing the two states of being, is wearing thin in places, and that amid the roar of water and of other noises, we on our side (that is he and his fellow-researchers) are beginning to hear now and again the strokes of the pickaxes of our comrades on the other side.

It is difficult not to smile at the naïveté, which has prompted this statement, and at the attitude of mind which it suggests. It does not seem to occur to Sir Oliver Lodge, that the Catholic Church has not only heard the sound of those pickaxes for centuries, but that she has had personal dealings with those who wield them, and that the hole in that wall has existed since man first appeared upon the earth. The oldest races of mankind have known of that hole, and any Indian fakir or spirit-medium to-day knows well how to make use of it. In any concise history of Spiritualism, such as that of De Vesme, Sir Oliver Lodge can find ample confirmation of this fact. Wild statements of this character should in themselves be sufficient to warn thoughtful

minds as to how far they may trust the scientific expounders of this intricate subject, and what degree of importance they must attach to their utterances.

But the fact remains and is now firmly established, on experimental grounds, that the spiritual world exists, and that, under certain conditions, it is possible to make connection with it.

The inhabitants of this spiritual world claim to be the surviving personalities of departed men. They have certain human qualities and characteristics, and they further claim that they have weighty disclosures to make to us respecting their life and the conditions of the world which they inhabit. They also assert that they have important spiritual truths to teach, errors to correct, new lights to impart to a benighted and misguided world. What are the grounds upon which they justify their claim? May right-minded men accept and credit their statements? What, in short, is the true source of the light which the spirit-world, in our time, is shedding upon the earth? These are the burning questions which at present are agitating inquiring minds, and which are increasingly seen to be the most important questions an intelligent man can ask. And it must be evident to the most indifferent of men, that to shelve these questions can no longer be regarded as either safe or possible. And it must be equally evident that, considering the grave issues involved, it is of the utmost importance that the answer which is given to them should, so far as this is possible, be the correct one.

From the literature of modern psychical science it will be seen that, for the scientific imagination, there exist, generally speaking, no beings in the unseen world except the souls of departed men. That world is bounded by the limits of their own minds, and the very possibility of truths being contained in the teachings of the Christian and of other religions, and in the religious traditions of mankind does not enter those minds. Such possibilities would conflict with reason, or, at least, with their reason, and with what they conceive to be the principles and claims of science, or, at least, of their science. "Pure" spirits (*i.e.:* angelic beings, who have never inhabited a human body) are consequently at once ruled out of court, and may not even come into consideration in weighing the question. The spirits of the modern séance-room claim to be human, they have certain human characteristics, and it is therefore, they assert, reasonable to suppose that they are in reality what they claim to be. It is thus that science, after first denying its existence, invades the sphere of the unseen world, and delivers its verdict. It is with this foregone conclusion that the modern researcher approaches the examination of the problem, and that he constructs his reasonings and his arguments. It is in its light that he disposes of all the objections and difficulties which this theory admittedly presents.

But there is another pre-conception which is apt to "hold" the scientific mind, and to determine the course and method of its enquiry. It is the keen desire to establish, if possible, by these means, the

fact of man's survival of physical death—to obtain scientific evidence of human immortality. This desire is the inevitable outcome of the loss of belief in Revealed Religion,[1] and goes far to explain the present keen and increasing interest in psychical phenomena. The human mind is so constructed that it cannot long dismiss the thought of the future. We know from the confessions of eminent scientists, what are the real processes of thought

[1] The root of spiritism." says a modern writer, "is the diseased moral condition of the age. Unsatisfied by the emptiness of materialism, and too powerfully dominated by intellectual pride to submit to the law of Christ, men seek another world capable of demonstrative proof."

"From the point of view of the believing Catholic, these strivings after higher knowledge have in them something which is at once piteous and abject. That men should trust such important issues to the workings of an imagination disordered and frequently diseased; that they should build a system upon phenomena which elude rational examination; that they should stake their hopes for time and eternity upon manifestations which have so much in common with the juggleries of the magician, while at the same time they shut their eyes to the proofs of supernatural life and supernatural power which living Christianity offers them, is a melancholy example of that fatuous superstition which is so often the punishment of unbelief. In Christianity they have the palpable evidence of a supernatural order—if such evidence can be furnished in this life at all. The history of that great system, reaching back through such a remote antiquity to beginnings which have no natural proportion with its growth and development, is in itself a fact which at once suggests an influence not encountered elsewhere in the world. The character of its Founder, the claims to divine dignity and to a divine mission, which He made the basis of His religion; the marvellous spread of the Faith which was founded on these claims, its conquest of the civilized world by merely moral force, its continued victories over the powers of evil which had corrupted the world before its time—all this is testimony to the supernatural, widely different in kind from the performance of the spirit-rapper, or the psychological messages of the Mahatma."—(From the Preface to the "Life of Father Charles," by Rev. Father Austin, Passionist).

which are apt to take place in the most materialistic of minds. Behind the most plausible of negative philosophies there are sometimes the signs of an uneasy heart, of a disquieted conscience, and of an intellect fiercely in conflict with itself. There is often a burning desire to be quite sure whether or not there lies anything beyond the boundaries of the visible life. The love of life and of self alone constantly create this keen and absorbing desire.

I have met with men, in all parts of the world, in whom I have observed these feelings and emotions to be at work, and in whom I have traced the real cause of their interest in psychical research. And we can understand and sympathize and make allowance for such feelings. But they are nevertheless calculated to prejudice and influence the mind in the interpretation of the phenomena, and to impel it in one particular and favoured direction. They are apt to create that bias which is believed to be absent from the true scientific mind. It is the sceptical researcher, who thus often becomes the most credulous of men, and who wholly loses the power of rightly estimating the value and bearing of evidence. It is certainly largely to this state of mind and to these inward half-realized desires that the increasing acceptance of the popular spiritistic theory is due.

Quite recently I had an interesting interview with an eminent scientific man, whose name has long been intimately associated with psychical research. I fully and freely discussed with him the present situation, and he admitted that the evidence, show-

ing the action of independent spirit-intelligence in connection with some of the phenomena, is now conclusive for the accurately-informed mind—that it is as good as it is ever likely to be. And so far we were, of course, in complete agreement. But when we came to consider the interpretation of the phenomena and the nature of the spirit-intelligence at work, I found myself face to face with a mind which was determined to find evidence to establish the popular spiritistic theory: that the dead are communicating. There seemed no room in that mind for any other possibility, and, as a consequence, the immense and largely-admitted difficulties attending this theory, were lightly dismissed and rigidly brushed aside. When I urged that the moral aspect of the matter must necessarily enter into a consideration of the character and aim of the intelligence in question, and therefore be a determining agent in the interpretation of the phenomena, he replied that he had never studied the matter from this point of view, that the chief thing for him was to establish identity, and as a consequence, as he thought, man's survival of physical death. It was evident that a keen personal desire to accomplish this dominated all the researches of this student of psychical science, and that he constructed his theories accordingly. Some startling facts, however, which I was able to place before him, supported as they were by documentary evidence, gave him abundant cause for reflection and he ultimately begged me to supply him with material for a fuller and more intimate study of the subject. Such inci-

dents as these are deeply significant and instructive, and they throw light upon what is often so difficult for some of us to understand.

On page 98 I have briefly summarized the claims which are being made by the spirit-intelligences which, in this age, are communicating with us by means of the séance and the medium. It is universally admitted that so far as the historic Christian belief is concerned, these claims are wholly revolutionary in their character. This is not only evident from all spriritistic literature and from the attempted "re-constructions" of science, but also from the visible effects of the acceptance of spiritistic principles upon the disciples of the new cult. The consistent modern spiritist cannot be and never is a Christian in the true, traditional, and historic sense of that word; on the contrary, he is, by virtue of the teaching which he is constantly and everywhere receiving, the deadly enemy of the Church and of her system, and it is from its creed that he proposes to emancipate the modern mind. "Spiritualism," wrote Mr. Stainton-Moses,[1] "is revolution, not simply reform. It is no time for polite patching up; we are in the very dust and din of spiritual strife, in the thick of a great spiritual conflict, the effects of which we shall try in vain to escape, and it is no time now to go about deprecating noise, and timidly sprinkling rose-water to quench the powder fumes of battle. The battle is

[1] Formerly a clergyman of the Church of England and a professor at University College, London, and probably the best educated and informed of modern spiritists.

upon us, and it is waste time to grumble at its smoke and din."

"The Christ-idea," wrote the great spirit "Imperator," "the spiritual truth that he proclaimed, is dragging out a lingering life, choked by the weeds of Sacerdotalism and of human Theology."

The claim itself, therefore, is clear and beyond dispute, and there cannot be respecting it any manner of doubt or misgiving.

Now, it will be conceded by all reasonable men, that there are three conditions, at the very least, which must be fulfilled before we can even contemplate a serious consideration of these claims:—

I. The spirit-intelligences must be able to identify themselves to our entire satisfaction, and they must furnish indubitable credentials as to their mission.

II. There must be unanimity and agreement in their teaching.

III. Intercourse with them and acceptance of their mission must be clearly shown to be for the moral and general good of mankind.

The most enthusiastic disciple of the cult will have to admit that I have stated the very minimum of what reason and common-sense would seem to demand in the matter. And it must be clear that we can allow no plausible theory of either spiritist or scientist, calculated to shelve the difficulty or to modify or relax these conditions, to affect our judgment, or to divert our attention. The issues involved in this matter are grave and far-reaching,

and there must be no trickery or juggling on either this side or the other of the imaginary partition or wall.

Now, it is absolutely certain that not one of these conditions can even approximately be fulfilled, and that all the facts which we possess to-day are emphatically pointing in the very opposite direction. They are demonstrating to conclusion that the spiritistic claims are utterly false and unfounded, and that the voice which speaks from the séance-room is the voice of the liar and the deceiver.

I have, in my work *Modern Spiritism*, stated in fuller detail by what evidence and processes of thought I have personally arrived at this conclusion, and I will not repeat them here. My present book would thus tend to assume quite unreasonable proportions. I will, as far as possible, place before the reader what experienced spiritists themselves have to say on this subject, and what science is constrained to admit, when it is in its more sober moods, and when it shows some disposition to be quite honest in the matter.

I

It is, perhaps, not very generally known that the question of the *identity* of the spirit-intelligences is really the crux of psychical research. The most strenuous attempts have been made, in both the scientific and the spiritistic camps, to get over this difficulty; but so far all these attempts have proved the most dismal failures. These extraordinary spirit-

teachers of mankind either cannot or will not tell us who and what they really are. And this must in itself take the thoughtful student of the matter by surprise. One might surely reasonably expect that, in view of a claim so revolutionary as that made by these spirits, it is to the matter of their identity and of the authoritative nature of their mission, that they would, above all things, and in the first place, address themselves. And, seeing that they inhabit a sphere which lies beyond our normal powers of perception, it is surely for them to furnish *the kind of evidence* which can wholly and absolutely convince and satisfy us on these points. But, although they have many startling things to tell us respecting themselves, and their world, and their life, and although they display in many instances the most astonishing intelligence and astuteness, they cannot, for reasons best known to themselves, fulfil our conditions.

In his recent pronouncement, Sir Oliver Lodge states that the question of identity is, of course, a fundamental one, and that the controlling spirit proves his identity mainly by the reproduction in speech or writing, of facts which belong to his memory and not of the automatist. Proof of identity, he urges, will usually depend on the memory of trifles. The objection raised, that communications too often relate to trivial subjects shows, he thinks, a lack of intelligence, or, at least, of due thought on the part of the critic. The object of psychical research, he says, is to get something evidential,

and what evidence of persistent memory can be better than the recollection of trifling incidents which, for some personal reason, happen to have made an impression?

It is surely not necessary to be possessed of a very high degree of intelligence in order to discover the shallowness of such a method of reasoning, and to discern the fallacy which underlies it. One would expect that the humblest and most imperfectly instructed student of psychical phenomena would be able to refute it. In the light of our knowledge of the phenomena of the subconscious mind, of the display of a certain kind of knowledge in conditions of mental passivity, of what is constantly taking place in modern séances to-day, the argument simply falls to the ground.

There is, in the first place, not a sensible man, in any degree versed in the ways of the world, who would acknowledge the identity of a long-lost relative simply because that relative is acquainted with trifles, because he knows the names of members of the family, places in which they lived, and in which they died, peculiarities of their person and character. It is just these trifles which are within the easy reach of other enquiring minds, and of which even an ordinary intelligence can easily obtain knowledge. Such trifles are often more accurately known to outsiders than to members of a particular family. Really cultivated minds have, as a rule, no memory for them, and would never seek to identify themselves by such means. Acquaintance with such

trifling things would most certainly not hold good in a court of justice. We read in the records of the famous Tichborne trial, that the claimant had the most intimate knowledge of trifles, he could accurately describe the appearance of persons and localities, and even indicate a particular tree in which he claimed to have, and apparently had, engraved his initials. The poor lady, whom he asserted to be his mother, was deeply impressed with this evidence. And yet a searching investigation proved him conclusively to be a liar and a deceiver and not the lawful claimant of the estate. And even if this were not so, the fact that, with a view to identification, the incident or circumstance related must be, and for the most part is, in some living mind, taking part in the experiment, entirely destroys the value of this kind of evidence.

It is today an ascertained fact in psychical research, that the intelligence acting in the séance-room has access to the sub-conscious thought-reservoir (if I may use such a term) of the passive mind of the sitter, and that it can abstract from that thought-reservoir a certain kind of knowledge. And experience goes to show that the knowledge, thus abstracted, almost always consists of trifles, and scarcely ever of that deeper inward knowledge which goes to constitute the real individuality of the man, and which in theology is termed the *secretum cordis*. It is the very circumstance that only this superficial kind of knowledge, mostly consisting in trifles, is disclosed, that should make

us suspicious. I would quote what Dr. Van Eeden, an experienced psychical researcher, has to say on this subject. In his address, delivered before the Fourth International Congress of Psychology, in Paris, in 1901, he made the following statement:—

"My personal impressions have been subject to the following variations: During the first series of experiments, in November of last year, I had on two or three occasions a very vivid impression that the man whose relics I had brought with me, namely, a pair of gloves, and who died sixteen years ago, was a living spirit, and in direct rapport with me through the intermediary, Mrs. Thompson; a number of small details gave me a sense of the evidence being complete. When I returned to Holland, I discovered that there were inexplicable errors. If I was really holding intercourse with the deceased, he could never have made such errors as I found in my notes. And what was noteworthy was, that these errors *were always in the details that I did not myself know, and which I was not able to correct at the time.*"

In explanation of the admitted errors which the intelligences thus constantly commit in the course of their communications, Sir Oliver Lodge proposes the plausible theory that the spirits may be in a state of semi-consciousness, or that, on the other side of life too, a medium, in closer contact with the earth-sphere, may be necessary for the transmission of the messages, and that the errors may be due to this medium and not to the transmitter.

But there is surely no experienced spiritist who would allow any such theory to pass muster, or who would concede that it is supported by the actual facts. On the contrary, the spirits of the séance-room are famous for their remarkable cleverness and sharpness, and for the adroit manner in which they are apt to extricate themselves out of a difficulty. So far from being in a state of trance or of haziness, they are, for the most part, very much awake, and the trance-like state only comes on when really evidential matter is demanded.

In a paper on *Trance Phenomena*, by Mr. J. G. Piddington, published in the January Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, in 1904, we read the following significant statement: "Mr. Hume-Rothery thought the suspicious side of trance communications deserve great attention. For instance, Prof. Hyslop's sittings with Mrs. Piper would have had sound evidential value but for two things. When the control professed to be quite clear much non-evidential matter was given fluently, but as soon as an attempt was made to give evidential matter, hesitation ensued. This latter would appear to need no more clearness of intellect than the former, but did need *a knowledge of the facts*.

"Again many details were given as to a relation of Prof. Hyslop. These were found not to apply to him but to a man of the same name (quite unrelated), *who had lived in the same county, and whose name figured in a local history*. These points raised a strong presumption against the communication

coming from the sources alleged. The speaker knew of a case where, after various communicators had alleged their presence and evidential matter had been given, the sitters charged the control with personation, in consequence of a false answer. After a spirited defence, the charge being still persisted in, the control stated that *it had personated all the alleged communications.*"

The late Mr. Stainton-Moses received a series of messages from musical composers, giving the principle data of their respective lives, as they may be found in every biographical dictionary, with hardly anything more. Their peculiar nature excited his surprise and he was informed by the "guides" "that these were, in fact, messages from the spirits in question, but *that they refreshed the memory of their earthly lives by consulting printed sources of information.*" "It is obvious," wrote Mr. Myers, "that this is to drop the supposed proofs of identity altogether. If any given spirit can consult his own printed life, so also, presumably, can other spirits, and so, perhaps, can the still incarnate spirit of the automatist himself."[1]

In an interesting work on *Modern Spiritualism*, published in the United States in 1874, by a Dr. Wolfe, evidently an ardent spiritualist, I found the following suggestive admissions:—

"I do not recognize any characteristics of my mother in the indirect method of answering my question. She always used plainness of speech and

[1] *Proceedings*, Part xxiv: vol. ix.

never failed to speak directly to the point. However, the information, so curiously stated, is in every particular true.

"The more I strive to convict my understanding," writes a friend of Dr. Wolfe, who was present at some of the séances, "the more unsatisfactory it becomes. For example, the letter before me is not the voice of ——. The names mentioned and the facts reverted to are startling; but those subtle characterizations that convince 'as soon as seen' are wanting."

Another friend of Dr. Wolfe wrote:—

"I asked forty-one questions and received the same number of answers. In some respects these were satisfactory; that is, I could not realize that the person who purported to be in communication with me could send precisely such messages. They were answers and they were reasonable; but in the answers I could not feel the source indicated. There was one peculiarity which struck and somewhat annoyed me. Every question I asked was a test, while every answer was *an avoidance of the test*. And yet, while this was going on, quite unexpectedly and, of course, quite unasked for, the most conclusive evidence would be given."

Mr. De Vesme, whose great work on the history of Spiritualism shows the most profound and extensive research, and whose favourable disposition towards the popular spiritistic theory is only too apparent, wrote in the *Annals*, of July, 1907, as follows:—

"We do not understand why the evidence so far is always fragmentary, filled with lacunae, and entangled with error. These personalities of the deceased (who give sometimes astounding proofs of identity, revealing secret details of their lives, speaking just as the individual in question would have spoken in his lifetime, yet at the same time incapable of giving us the name of wife or child or other essential facts of the same nature) absolutely perplex us. We know the ingenious, and perhaps correct, theories by which it is attempted to explain these lacunae of intelligence in the persons supposed to visit us from the beyond. We refer to these in the present issue with reference to the experiments of Prof. Hyslop, but we confess that we find some difficulty in accommodating our understanding to conditions of existence so different from those in which we live. Lastly we are obliged to recognize, with spiritistic writers themselves, such as Myers and Aksakof, that we do not see how we can arrive at establishing, in a positive manner, the *identity* of a 'spirit,' and that we ought to limit ourselves to a relative certainty, such as we hold concerning historical truth, the social sciences, etc. Moreover, why should we stick so obstinately to the spirit-hypothesis, properly so-called? We know that Sir W. Crookes, for instance, whilst he asserts that he has not been able to identify the so-called spirits as souls of deceased persons, at least declares that he is persuaded that they are spirits independent of the psyche of the medium."

In Prof. Camille Flammarion's work on *Mysterious Psychic Forces*, we meet with these significant admissions: "As to beings different from ourselves—what may their nature be? Of this we cannot form any idea. Souls of the dead? This is far from being demonstrated. The innumerable observations which I have collected during *more than forty years*, all prove to me the contrary. No satisfactory identification has been made." (p. 436.)

"That souls survive the destruction of the body I have not the shadow of a doubt. But that they manifest themselves by the processes employed in séances, the experimental method has not yet given us absolute proof." (p. 439.)

Up to this day I have sought in vain for certain proof of personal identity through mediumistic communications." (p. 440.)

In one of his interesting books on psychical phenomena, Dr. Isaac Funk, of New York, writes this: "Through one of the best mediums I have ever met, I was told that the spirit of Theodore Parker wished me to do a certain thing. This was explicit. Three days after I was with another medium, whom I believed, and still believe, to be honest. Theodore Parker reported himself as present, but *denied* all knowledge of the previous interview, saying that he was not there and had said nothing of the kind.

"Since that time I have had Theodore Parker reported as present at a dozen séances through different mediums, and have not been able to have

him recognize any previous interview that I have had with him." (p. 202).

But in spiritistic literature, too, especially in that of the more responsible and critical kind, we come upon similar statements and admissions.

"Dr. Peebles," writes one, "gave me an instance of a prominent spiritualist who had consulted thirty mediums upon the subject of identifying and communicating with a relative of his in the spirit-life. In these communications, he said, there were twenty-seven contradictions and no positive proof that identified his brother. Dr. Peebles himself explained these contradictions," says the writer, "by obsessions — obsessions by evil spirits, often termed demons, against whom, he tells us, certain protection is to be had by sincere prayer, pure desire, and real faith in the upper universe."

Another experimenter, writing to Dr. Peebles, says: "The writing exactly resembled that of my deceased wife, but was, almost without exception, extremely blasphemous and vulgar."

Dr. Peebles is probably the oldest and best informed spiritist living. He has studied the phenomena in all parts of the world, and has published many interesting books on the subject.

The London *Times*, of the 9th of July, 1908, in its criticism of Mr. Carrington's book: *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, admits the overwhelming nature of the evidence showing the operation of independent and intelligent agencies, and declares that, in the end, theory, after tortuous

evasions and endeavours to stretch every hypothesis a little further than it will go, comes round in most cases to the ancient, world-wide explanation, that this baffling personality is a spirit—a disembodied soul or some sort of daimonion or elemental; and then goes on to say: "A sad conclusion to come to after all. When we are banished from the earthly body, are we to join the wordy rabble which speaks by the mouth or the pen of the mediums? These wild utterances do not seem, as a rule, like revelations of the secrets of the prison-house, but rather like gibberings from a lunatic asylum, peopled by inmates of vulgar behaviour and of the lowest morals; creatures that lie and cheat, give false names and unverifiable addresses."

And, finally, in a leading article of the spiritistic journal *Light*, of March 13th, 1909, we meet with the following naïve admission:—

"It is a fact which we cannot gainsay, that the hardest thing to prove from 'the other side' is identity; and we know of no test that can determine it. A display of knowledge will not do it, for the displayer may only be a shrewd and industrious observer or picker-up of information; and a display of ignorance will not do it, for the seeming impostor may only be forgetful or in a fog; but this is no reason," the writer goes on to say, "why even the most intimate communion should be foregone. It is no reason why we should communicate on terms of suspicion."

The above references will be sufficient to show

what the real facts are with regard to this matter. They are clear and emphatic enough to free me from any suspicion of manipulating my evidence, or of myself labouring under some religious bias or pre-conception. I have produced the evidence of those who are most interested in establishing spirit-identity, and who have been engaged with this problem for a number of years. My own evidence on the subject, I need hardly say, is varied and abundant in character, and is for myself wholly conclusive.

It is an established fact, therefore, that whatever else the spirits can do or have done, they cannot prove their identity in a satisfactory manner, and as a consequence, their startling claims and their testimony respecting themselves fall to the ground. Those claims are wholly unsupported, and that testimony is mischievous and misleading. All right-minded men must come to this conclusion.

The plausible theories by which some scientific men are seeking to escape these inferences, and to account for the worthlesssness of the evidence, are due to the circumstance that they have positively no better evidence to offer. It is certain that so far as recent experimental research is concerned, no advance whatever has been made in the matter of establishing spirit-identity, and that the enquiry stands exactly where it stood at the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research, nearly twenty-five years ago.

II

The claims of the spirit-intelligences cannot, in the second place, be expected to secure the attention of thoughtful men, unless it can be clearly shown that there is *agreement and unanimity in their teaching.*

This will surely be admitted to be an altogether reasonable condition, seeing how prodigious the claim is which the spirits make, and how revolutionary and subversive the reforms are which they propose. The least that we can expect is that the spirit-teachers, claiming to come to us on such a mission, be themselves acquainted with the truths and facts which they desire to inculcate, and that they be, respecting them, of one mind.

Now, there is probably no aspect of the spiritistic theory which is more utterly destructive to its claims, and which so forcibly illustrates its untenableness and imbecility, as this matter of the spirit-creed and philosophy. We look in vain for any kind of agreement or one-ness of idea on any single point of teaching emanating from the spirit-spheres. All is confusion, chaos, and disorder, and the inconsistencies and contradictions with which we meet, are sometimes altogether ridiculous in their character. They certainly amply justify that witty remark, which originated, I think, in an American mind, and which was to the effect, that while we had beyond doubt "tapped the other world, it was evident that we had tapped it at the lunatic asylum end."

"Everyone outside a lunatic asylum," writes Prof. Barrett, "must revolt from the hideous nightmare of a spiritual realm such as is depicted by the quasi ticket-of-leave ghost met with in the physical and form manifestations of the spiritualistic séance."

But I cannot do better than quote here what I wrote and quoted in my book, *Modern Spiritism*, some years ago.[1]

"Vagueness, contradiction, and mystification surround us on every side, and it would seem to be an utterly impossible thing to construct, from the mass of material at our disposal, anything approaching any clear and definite truth.

"On the great subject of religion, of man's duty towards God, the spirits are hopelessly at variance, and it is a well-known fact that, in reply to questions formulated with a view to eliciting a clear and unequivocal statement, the most unsatisfactory and contradictory answers are apt to be given. They teach one religion in America, another in England, another in France, and there is underlying these teachings no single principle that would enable us to harmonize them or to deduce from them some simple and elementary objective truth.

"Some spirits, for instance, teach universal reincarnation; others deny it. The spirits speaking through the mediumship of Allan Kardec in France, of Stainton-Moses in England, of Swedenborg in Sweden, of Mrs. Piper in America, have different

[1] Pages 197 et seq.

and mutually contradictory information to impart, and could not possibly have drawn that information from a common source. The communications, conveyed through these respective mediums, would seem to reflect and to express some latent belief or subjective creed of the sensitive himself, rather than any objective truth universally known and understood in the world of spirit, and disclosed for the moral advancement and enlightenment of mankind.

"On all minor points, such as the conditions pertaining to the future world, and our life in it after death, the same confusion and contradiction prevail, and it would be difficult, for the mind most favourably disposed towards the spiritistic position, to introduce anything like order into the chaos of conflicting ideas, or to exhibit any single statement in reference to the unseen world and its life, respecting which there can be shown to be absolute unanimity."

How grotesquely absurd and contradictory these communications are, may be gathered from a summary of spirit-teaching given by Dr. William Potter (at one time himself a spiritist) in a volume entitled, *Spiritism as it is.*

"The teachings and theories given through the different manifestations," he writes, "are as various as it is possible to conceive. Indeed, few of the most devoted 'seekers after truth under difficulties' are aware of the endless contradictions and absurdities that are mixed up with the most exalted truths and the most profound philosophies. We have room for only a tithe of them, for we have not yet

found the first question or subject about which they do not contradict each other. . . .

"'We are taught that God is a person; that He is impersonal; that He is omnipotent; that He is governed by nature's laws; that everything is God; that there is no God; that we are gods. We are taught that the soul is eternal; that it commences its existence at conception, at birth, at maturity, at old age. That all are immortal, that some are immortal, that none are immortal. That the soul is a winged monad in the centre of the brain, that it gets tired, and goes down into the stomach to rest; that it is material, that it is immaterial; that it is unchangeable, that it changes like the body, that it dies with the body; that it develops the body, that it is developed by the body, that it is human in form; that it is in but one place at a time, that it is in all places at the same time.'

"'We are taught that the spirit-world is on earth —just above the air—beyond the milky way. That it has but one sphere, three spheres, six spheres, seven spheres, thirty-six spheres, an infinite number of spheres. That it is a real, tangible world; that it is all a creation of the mind of the beholder, and appears different to different spirits. That it is inhabited by animals, birds, etc.; that they do not inhabit it. That it is a sea of ether, that it is a plain, that it has mountains, lakes, and valleys, that it is a belt around the earth. We are taught that spirits eat food—live by absorption, live on magnetism, thoughts, love; that they control media by will-

power, by magnetism, by entering beyond our atmosphere, by permission of the Lord.'

"'We are taught that spirits converse by thought-reading, by oral language. That their music is harmony of soul—that it is instrumental and vocal. That they live single; in groups of nine. That they marry without having offspring; that they have offspring by mortals; that they have offspring by each other. That their marriage is temporal; that it is eternal. That spirits never live again in the flesh; that they do return and enter infant bodies, and live many lives in the flesh. That some are born first in the sphere, and afterwards on earth in the flesh. That the true affinity is born in the spirit-world at the same time that the counterpart is born on earth. That all spirits are good; that some are bad; that all progress, that some progress, that none progress. . . .'

"'We are taught that there is no high, no low, no good, no bad. That murder is right, lying is right, slavery is right, adultery is right. That whatever is, is right. That nothing we can know can injure the soul or retard its progress. That it is wrong to blame any; that none should be punished; that man is a machine and not to blame for his conduct. . . .'

"'We are taught that the spirit of the tree exists in perfect form after the tree is burnt. That monads are God's thoughts, and go through all forms of rocks, trees and animals, and at last become men. That we see by a positive radiation that goes out from the eyes and touches things. That thoughts are living entities, and may flow down the arm

on to the paper; if that is burnt they float around. That spirit is substance in absolute condensation; that matter is substance whose particles never touch. That all earthly marriage is of the flesh and must end; and that the true affinity is of a spirit-mate, born at the same time in spirit-life that the counterpart is born on earth.'

"'All the above teachings,' adds the author, 'we have heard given by media or from communications.'"

That statements such as these are based upon actual spirit-communications may be seen from the work of a more recent investigator of the subject, the late Dr. Lapponi, who writes from the standpoint of science rather than from that of religion, but whose views coincide with those of Dr. Potter.

"Another not less surprising fact," says Dr. Lapponi,[1] "is the facility with which the spirits adapt themselves to the tastes of their clients. It might be said, like the ancient Pythoness, who suited her oracles to please King Philip, so to-day the spirits are partial to the professed opinions of those who consult them, pious with the pious, affectionate with the affectionate, political with politicians, business-like with merchants, learned with the lovers of learning, thoughtless with the gay, vulgar and gross with the vulgar. For this reason in England the spirits are sceptical, discursive and cautious; in Germany, mystical, speculative, and transcendental; and in France, licentious, generous, thoughtless, and frivolous. In the United States of America they are

[1] *Hypnotism and Spiritism*, p. 200.

positive, dogmatic, and bold, and proclaim metempsychosis, whilst elsewhere, especially in Italy, they declare themselves to be pantheists, atheists, materialists. Among the Mormons, and in Utah, they approve and praise polygamy; and then where abortion is commonly practised, they declare it to be both lawful and a duty. In Russia they praise the orthodox religion, and at the same time encourage the nihilistic propaganda. In Spain, on the other hand, they demand that all spiritistic societies shall be incorporated with the Freemasons, declaring that spiritism has common cause with the latter with regard to principles and the chief foundations of doctrine. If there is one thing in which the spirits agree, it is in abusing the Roman Catholic Religion, of which they can only speak evil."

We may well leave these statements to speak for themselves, since it would be difficult to add to their force by any additional evidence. I have personally never, in the course of my study of the subject, come across any intelligent theory which offers a sensible explanation of these absurdly contradictory spirit-teachings, and it is astonishing to think that rational persons can offer them in all seriousness as substitutes for the Creed which we profess. The humorous part of the matter is that every spiritist believes his particular "control" to be speaking the truth and everybody else's to be telling untruths or "to be functioning through an imperfect organism in which the spirit's thoughts become inconveniently intermingled with those of the medium."

III

The spiritistic claim and theory cannot, in the third place, hope to receive the serious attention of rightminded men unless it can be clearly shown that intercourse with these spirits, and belief in their mission, are *for the moral and general good of mankind.*

The most enthusiastic of spiritists and of scientific investigators will be constrained to admit that this condition is a simple one, and that it is both reasonable and fair. It is not here a question merely of interesting phenomena which somehow present themselves, and of which the student of man and of nature is bound to take notice. It is not a question of manifestations which force themselves upon our attention. The phenomena of modern spiritism are deliberately induced and invoked. They require the formation of the spirit-circle, the development of mediumistic or psychic powers in certain individuals, and the induction of "conditions" known to facilitate the display of these intelligent agents. And it is necessary and important to emphasize this point, which is only too apt to be lost sight of, and forgetfulness of which leads to a vast amount of confusion and misapprehension.

Modern psychical research cannot, strictly speaking, concern itself with what one may term spontaneous spirit-manifestations, except in so far as it may collect and examine the evidence which goes to

show their actual occurrence. The laws which govern such spontaneous manifestations lie beyond the ken of any researcher or man of science. They have been observed in all times of human history, and in no age of the world has any enquiring person got any nearer to the solution of the mystery which enshrouds them. All that we know about them is that they occur, and that we can, in most instances, trace in them some kind of moral or spiritual aim. And, in my opinion, it is a most illegitimate and mischievous proceeding, on the part of both spiritists and psychical students, to bring these two classes of phenomena into any kind of co-relation or juxtaposition. There is no ground whatever for asserting that they are identical either in their cause or in their character.

The phenomena here under consideration are *induced and invited.* It is with them that science is engaged, and it is upon the communications, elicted by various known means, that the present claims of both spiritist and psychical student are built up. We are not, therefore, in any sense in the presence of normal phenomena, or, perhaps, of "acts of God," calling for man's intelligent thought and attention. On the contrary, we are in the presence of artificially produced manifestations, respecting the origin and character of which we have a right and a duty to make searching enquiry, and the very lawfulness and legitimacy of which we must of necessity determine by such enquiry.

Now, it may, I think, be confidently asserted that whatever the scientific value of recently ascertained

facts, there is not an accurately informed person living who will be bold enough to assert that spiritism, regarded from this point of view, has been or is for the moral or general good of mankind. The entire history of the cult, as we can trace it in both sacred and secular literature, goes to form a verdict to the contrary, and that verdict is altogether damaging in its character.

Even a writer like Prof. Barrett (*A New World of Thought*," p. 9), strongly disposed as he is towards the popular spiritistic theory, has to admit this; and the only way in which he finds it possible to escape from the necessary inference from this fact is by asserting that the times have changed, and that the laws which bound other nations do not bind us, nor the scientific man to-day.

The entire history of the Jewish people is full of penal enactments against necromancy, and exhibits a knowledge, by the legislators of the race, of its corroding moral effects. It was always and everywhere destructive of morals and of the true religious life of the people. "Thy spells and enchantments," writes the Prophet Isaiah, "with which thou hast wearied thyself have led thee astray."

"These practices were condemned," says Prof. Barrett, "in unmeasured terms by the Hebrew prophets. . . . They were prohibited—as a study of the whole subject undoubtedly shows—not only, or chiefly, because they were the practice and part of the religious rites of the pagan nations around, but mainly because they tended to obscure the

divine idea, and to weaken the supreme faith in and reverent worship of the one Omnipotent Being, Whom the nation was set apart to proclaim. . . . Instead of the arm of the Lord beyond and above them, a motley crowd of pious, lying, vain, or gibbering spirits would seem to people the unseen; and weariness, perplexity, and finally despair would enervate and destroy the nation."

As a learned and suggestive theologian has recently said: "Augury and divination wearied a people's intellect, stunted their enterprise, distorted their conscience. . . . In later years, Juvenal's strong conscience expressed the same sense of the weariness and waste of time, consequent upon these practices. In the New Testament the ground to some extent changes; unmistakable warnings are uttered of the spiritual dissipation and danger which the early Christians would suffer, if they allowed their religion to be degraded by the spiritual thaumaturgy still prevalent among neighbouring nations."

What those practices of neighbouring and other pagan and savage nations were, to what fearful and immoral rites and beliefs they gave rise, it is unnecessary to state here, for to state it adequately would mean the writing of a separate book. The serious student of the subject will know where to turn for authoritative and responsible instruction and information. The fact itself, i.e.: of the debasing moral effect of these practices, is established, and, as the above reference shows, fully admitted, and it is with this fact that we are here chiefly concerned.

And "the same peril," writes Prof. Barrett, "exists to-day and through all time will continue to exist." And to this fact thousands upon thousands of disillusioned persons, in every land and nation, will bear their unhesitating and emphatic testimony.

My own writing-table is full of such testimonies, and I may some day see my way to placing them before the public. They will go to show how very grave the peril is at present and what terrible things are going on in our midst.

But here, too, I will adduce the testimony of other investigators and students of the subject, as well as my own, and will quote from writers who have themselves embraced the spiritistic belief.

1. In the first place, it is obvious from their admitted mode of action, that the vast majority of these spirit-intelligences are immoral and frivolous, both in their character and their aim. We have already seen that they cannot establish their identity, and science itself admits that they are distinguished for their love of deception and of impersonating the dead. We must, therefore, on these grounds alone, pronounce them to be deceivers and liars, playing as they do with man's purest and holiest affections and feelings.

And even though it be conceded that they really are the spirits of the dead, it must be evident that they must have been beings of a very low and debased order when on this earth, or that they must have passed through a process of moral deterioration on the other side of life. To what terrible delusions

and moral disorders such impersonations are apt to lead will be obvious to any reflecting mind. Volumes might be written on the subject, and they would not exhaust the material which is available. One is naturally disposed to obey the advice and to adjust the life and even the religious belief to the counsels which one believes to come from a departed husband, wife, or beloved friend. And the weaker ones of mankind are apt to obey such advice, even though it may be plainly seen to run counter to long-established principles of life and of thought. It is for this reason, clearly, that these subtle intelligences come to us in the form and with the faces of the dead, and that, abstracting from the minds of the living all the requisite knowledge, they thus sucessfully create these impersonations. I know personally of a case in which the delusion had been successfully sustained, by the most astounding of devices, for a number of years, and in which the denouement only occurred when the entire moral and religious life of the victim had been disordered. The intelligence then boasted of its ingenuities and disclosed the sources from which the knowledge displayed had been obtained, and the means which had been employed for that purpose.

And indeed unimaginably subtle and varied are the tricks to which these spirit-agents will resort, and vastly superior is their intelligence to that of those who evoke them. One cannot help smiling sometimes at some of these artifices, and at the gullibility of the scientific mind. It does not seem

to occur to that mind that, as a matter of fact, the scientific method is wholly inapplicable and out of place in this sphere of research. I have, in my little work on *The Dangers of Spiritualism* recorded some instances of spirit-impersonation which have come under my personal observation, and many equally striking ones have come to my knowledge since the publication of that book.

The spiritist admits, of course, the reality of these occurrences, but he seeks to escape the obvious inference to be drawn from them by asserting, that all invoked spirit-manifestations are not necessarily impersonations. How fallacious, however, this mode of reasoning is will be seen when it is borne in mind, that such impersonations demonstrate to us what these intelligences can accomplish, what extraordinary resources they possess, and that consequently, we, on our side, have no means whatever by which we can distinguish the false from the true. With such facts before us how can we be expected to put confidence in *any* spirit-communication, or conceive the possibility even of establishing identity. And how hopelessly do the preposterous claims of these beings, as to their aim and mission in the world, thus fall to the ground! "Some spirits," wrote the late Mr. Stainton-Moses,[1] "will assent to leading questions, and possessed apparently with a desire to please, or unconscious of the import of what they say, or without moral consciousness, will say anything. Such motiveless lying bespeaks

[1] *Spirit Identity.*

a deeply evil nature. . . . Such an impostor, acting with an air of sincerity, must be as satan clothed in light."

"It must be clear," writes Mr. Aksakof[1]—a great authority in spiritistic research—"that if the spirit of a medium has the power to share the inward conceptions of the sitters and to form a body in accordance with them, how much more must a spirit, freed from the body, be able to do this, and to an extent of which we have no idea. This is the reason why likeness is no proof of identity."

In theosophical circles, too, the fact of spirit-impersonations and the necessarily unfavourable inference to be drawn from them, is fully admitted and recognized, and experienced students of the subject give us unmistakable warnings: "A manifesting spirit," writes Mr. Leadbeater,[2] "is often exactly what it professes to be, but often also is nothing of the kind, and for the ordinary sitter there is absolutely no means of distinguishing the true from the false, since the extent to which a being, having all the resources of the astral plane at its disposal, is able to deceive, is so great that no reliance can be placed even on what seems the most convincing proof."

Another theory by means of which the disciples of the spiritistic cult are seeking to escape from their fatal dilemma is the theory of "spiritual affinity." it is asserted that in the psychic world like attracts like, and that each individual enquirer attracts to

[1] *Animism and Spiritism.* [2] *The Astral Plane.*

himself and gets in contact with, that particular sphere which corresponds with his own mental or moral condition and degree of development. The pure attract the pure, the morally degenerate draw the low and debased, the doubter and the sceptic gets into rapport with beings of a similar disposition of mind and of character. If low and deceiving intelligences, therefore, manifest, it must be ascribed to the fact that a corresponding mental condition predominates in the circle.

This ingenious theory still finds defenders in the spiritistic sphere; a careful study of the actual facts, however, has long since disproved it. The most experienced of spiritists themselves have abandoned it. The following are the words of the veteran spiritist, Dr. Peebles, taken from his recently published book *The Demonism of the Ages*:—

"The soft palliative sometimes advanced by the psychically uneducated, that an evil-inclined spirit can harm no one unless there is active or latent evil within attracting the evil from without, is not only false and illogical, but absolutely silly (p. 201). These low-intentioned, hand-clasping, promiscuous, pitch-dark, midnight séances, that show muslin-manufactured spirit-faces, suggest the location of buried treasures, or find 'social affinities,' all belong to the same category. Such spirit-séances are the seed-sowing grounds of demonism. Their manifestations are from the hells. They should be shunned as one would shun the dens of slimy adders. They constitute the very essence of witchcraft under a more polished name" (p. 217).

But it is not in these endless tricks and deceptions, in these impersonations and fraudulent messages alone that we have evidence as to the character of these intelligences. They are often but the means by which a certain end is attained. A crafty and far subtler aim lies behind these manifestations and constitutes their real danger.

The keynote of all psychical and spiritistic research is, as is well known, *passivity of mind*—the cultivation of a negative physical and mental attitude on the part of the experimenters and of the medium. It is universally admitted that no evidential phenomena can be obtained unless the circle is absolutely harmonious and passive, and unless the state of mind of the sitters is that of entire receptivity. The phenomena are fugitive and unsatisfactory if the attention be too alert, or if too critical a method of observation be employed. It is only in sittings held with a view to eliciting the physical phenomena that this rule does not apply as regards the circle. The medium or sensitive must always be passive, and the best phenomena of all occur when that passivity is absolute—when it passes into a condition of complete unconsciousness and of trance. "We cannot work," say the spirits, "unless your own mental activity and your will be in abeyance." And thousands upon thousands of even expert experimenters accept this principle, and, as a consequence, tumble into this trap.

Now, I am convinced from a long and careful study of the subject, that the induction and steady deepening of this condition of passivity is the real ultimate

aim of the spirit-intelligences, and that all the elusive manifestations of the séance-room are arranged with a view to this end. It is with the intention of gradually "gaining control," as the spiritistic terminology has it, that all the well-known wearisome tricks are performed, and that the experimenter is kept in that state of mind in which he is "forever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth." This is certainly one of the reasons why no finality is ever reached in the study of psychical manifestations.

Thus it is with this end in view that messages are suddenly broken off "in order to be continued to-morrow," that additional phenomena and communication are constantly promised, that confusion and error in the spelling out of messages are purposely introduced, and that the mind is kept in that state of suspense which only finds relief at the approach of to-morrow's séance, "when all is to be explained and set right." Thus gradually and imperceptibly the power of resistance is weakened, an habitual state of passivity is induced, and the communicating spirit ultimately becomes the master of the mind and of the will of his victim. In some instances the process of this obsessing of the mind is a partial and intermittent one, leading to the perversion of the moral life and its principles, to a hundred foolish notions and imaginations, to ennui and weariness of life, and even to suicide, the *real* cause of which is not even suspected by the victim.

In other cases a naturally weak will and temperament facilitate an immediate and complete control.

And in such instances we have all the familiar phenomena of obsession and possession.[1]

I have discussed this matter with medical men, of the more enlightened type, and it is certain that, in the treatment of these cases, great changes are at hand. It is increasingly seen, even by some of the more orthodox of practitioners, that the theories of the subconscious mind and of "secondary personalities" will not suffice as explanations in some of these cases, and that the action of independent external agencies must be admitted to account intelligently for the phenomena exhibited. And it is freely acknowledged that in such cases the remedy is not to be found within the sphere of medical science. I could write a volume were I to bring forward all the evidence which I possess on this subject, and which has gone to convince even the most sceptical of scientific students.

I will here briefly, and in mere outline, give the history of two recent cases with which I have become personally connected, and in both of which the subtle action of an external agency was only too apparent. In the course of my recent travels in Australia, I came across a Catholic lady who, under

[1] "There is danger—real danger—" writes Dr. Isaac K. Funk "along these lines of investigation. I have seen psychic cobwebs—if cobwebs they be—tangle the feet of even intellectual giants, and the shrewdest experts—to change the simile—need to sail these mystic seas with sharp eyes and level heads, for these seas are almost wholly uncharted, and in sailing over them at times the ship's compasses exhibit inexplicable variations."—*Widow's Mite and Other Psychic Phenomena.*

the firm impression that she was in communication with her mother and other high intelligences, had fallen a victim to the spiritistic philosophy, and had developed her own psychic or mediumistic power. In the course of time she had entirely passed under the influence of the intelligences, who had by these practices entered into her "mental sphere," and her Catholic life, as a consequence, had become entirely overshadowed. She had become obedient to their teaching and injunctions. When I met her she had lost all faith in the reality and validity of the Sacraments, and found it morally and physically impossible to receive them. A barrier had arisen between herself and the true spiritual order. When she could get herself to pray she did so without devotion and without any sense of its reality. She had been persistently told by the intelligences, that these practices were utterly worthless. In the presence of a priest, or of any sacred object, she became violently agitated and inclined to blaspheme. The clergy, in whose district she lived and who had known her and her family for years, emphatically confirmed this. From time to time something like a very storm (as she termed it) of nerve-excitement and of agitation would sweep over her soul, bringing with it violent sexual temptations and leaving her wretched and exhausted. She had great difficulty in remaining loyal to her husband. "Circumstances" which she did not create brought her in contact with women of a doubtful character, from whom her better nature shrank with disgust. Occasionally a sense of her miserable con-

dition would come home to her, and she would begin to question the integrity of the intelligences and their aim, and she would make frantic efforts to free herself. But both doctors and priests had failed to help her.

She happened to hear of my views on the subject and came to see me. I was able to place evidence before her in support of my views which worked a revolution in her mind. She finally consented to see my friend, an able and learned young priest, fully acquainted with the intricacies of the subject, and to him she made a full sacramental confession. The result was that she came to her senses, that her faith and devotion returned, and with it her mental and physical health. After her confession, she requested Fr. G. to tell me *all* the circumstances of the case, so that I might be able to use this knowledge in the interests of other similarly afflicted victims. Fr. G. naturally shrank from such a disclosure—at least so far as the details were concerned. He gave me the mere outline of her story. The poor lady, however, was under the impression that he had told me all. Some weeks later she came to see me and told me the following story :—

She had gone into a Church at which a mission was being conducted by one of the Marist Fathers, and had knelt down to pray. An impression (or voice she called it) had suddenly come to her and had informed her that Fr. G. had not told me all, that it was very important that I should know, and that she must go to me at once and tell

me. She started off in a pouring rain, and when I met her her state of agitation was pitiable. Her manifest distress was only relieved when her earnest wish had been complied with.

There are about this case several remarkable features. The poor lady was certainly under the impression that I knew all, which would be reasonable, considering my intimate relation to Fr. G. and her own earnest request that, for the sake of other afflicted souls, the priest was free to disclose the matter. This lady is now entirely restored to health and to the peace and happiness of her former family life, and her letters to my friend are touching in the extreme. She finds it difficult to understand to-day how she could have come to trust these spirit-guides, considering the *kind* of advice which they ultimately gave her. She sees clearly now how completely their teaching had undermined her moral character, and had deprived her of a sense of the proportion of things. But here, of course, lies the chief peril of these unlawful practices.

On the day after my return to England, I received an urgent message from a friend who had long been an experimental student of psychical phenomena, and with whom I had had many discussions on spiritism. Some five years before he had begged me to meet a lady who, like himself, was keenly interested in the subject, but who, in his opinion, was going too deeply into the matter. I explained to this lady what I knew to be the subtle dangers

attending these researches, and gave her a very serious warning. She fully admitted the existence of these dangers, but showed very clearly that she believed me to take extreme views of the matter. Five years had passed away, during which time she had ardently continued her researches. But now a change had come over the scene. The intelligences had become aggressive, had begun to interfere with her daily and Christian life, and had shown signs of unexpectedly "taking control." She called to mind my earlier warning, and expressed a desire to see me. When I found her in London, she was in the hands of two trained nurses and under the treatment of a specialist, who was greatly perplexed by the curious features which the case presented. I had a long interview with him, and he admitted that my theory explained the circumstances of the case better than his own. He incidentally told me that a steadily increasing number of cases of this kind were coming under his observation. In any case, the treatment adopted according to my theory restored this lady, who was on the point of being put under restraint, to comparative health. Upon her recovery, I heard her story from her own lips, and it was the old story of protracted experiment, of a steadily increasing state of passivity, and of subsequent "control" or obsession. When the right moment had come the spirit-intelligence had made no secret as to its aims and had given ample evidence of its independent existence and knowledge. A similar and still more striking case, of which I have secured documentary evidence, will be found on p. 198.

I am fully persuaded that the time is rapidly coming when the most sceptical of psychologists will have to yield before the abundant evidence, and when experience will prove, not only the perils attending the induction of these states of passivity, but also the immoral and debasing nature and aims of the spirit-powers which by these means are let loose upon the world. What scientific men will have to recognize is that, while they are, by these psychic experiments, opening doors by which both the subjective mind and independent spirit-intelligences can invade the normal mental organism and cause the most dreadful disorder in the mental and moral life, they know of no means by which these doors can be shut, and that in most cases they must remain permanently open. They will have to learn that they are playing with forces of which they are quite ignorant, and which lie wholly outside the control of any kind of scientific method or treatment. And any thoughtful person must see at a glance that all this applies with equal force to the practices which prevail in connection with Christian science cures, and with the doings of the modern Emmanuel movement. These developments could never have taken place and secured such vast numbers of adherents were the public mind properly instructed in these matters, and did it understand the principles on which these new movements work.

It is all a matter of passivity and of suggestion, and every student of psychology knows to-day what astounding things can be achieved by these means. It is simply inconceivable that Christian science

could have secured such widespread acceptance, were not its practices attended by effects which are beyond all dispute real. Its dogmatic teachings are so manifestly contrary to the very elementary principles of the Gospel, which insists upon the moral value of suffering and its redemptive power, that one would imagine that a child in a Sunday-school could refute them. The delusion has succeeded because of its effects. Its adherents have, by the application of a simple principle, secured physical benefits. But it does not seem to occur to them that they could have secured the same benefits at the hands of any experienced psychologist without the adoption of the ridiculous dogmatic scheme in which the psychological principle is embedded.

It is certain that even in cases of real organic trouble an apparent cure and improvement are often effected; but such cures are effected, not by the disappearance of the disease, but the induction of the passive state, and by hypnotic or auto-suggestion. The newspapers, however, are constantly recording cases in which Christian scientists have died or have allowed their relatives to die, in the firm belief that the treatment adopted would *continue* to cure, or that the disease had no real existence.

Pain and other symptoms and discomfort surely are nature's method of indicating the seat of organic or functional trouble or disease, and it must be evident that by the obliteration of these the danger of the patient is increased a hundredfold. It is here where we are face to face with the utter fallacies of these systems. I have purposely made this

digression, because the dangers incidental to these modern cults are so very great, and because they are so steadily on the increase. Thousands of thoughtless persons are falling victims to them, and are becoming a prey to either grave mental disorders or to subtle masquerading spirit-intelligences. The manipulation, of subtle psychical forces, by these supposed new prophets and self-constituted masters in Israel, is becoming a veritable danger to society.

The following is a letter which recently appeared in a Washington paper over the name of a thoughtful medical man :—[1]

"In these hectic days of spiritism, Eddyism, Dowieism, occultism, scepticism and self-advertised clericism, can we wonder at the great amount of public attention given to the peccadilloes of the would-be users of the powerful force of psychotherapy, and not be startled when we hear it stated that they alone should be superior to the times? Hypnotism (psychotherapy) has been taken up with a dangerous optimism by the public, and the ignorant believe that anything can be done with it. The very phrase, 'subconscious,' appears to have a peculiar fascination for a certain type of mind. I sincerely trust that hypnotism will not be reduced to a system. There is quite enough illegitimate influence in the world already. Psychic symptoms are now quite frequent. Temporary amnesia — a diminution or loss of memory, capriciousness, inconsistencies in ideas and conduct, dissociation of personality, and hallucinations, are all the possible occasions of hysteria. Hysterical persons are easily

[1] *Washington Herald.* William B. Meaney, M.D.

influenced to change their thoughts, to do certain acts, to acquire certain sensations, to execute or adopt certain motor phenomena. Therefore, suggestion or auto-suggestion plays an enormous rôle. The application of this element should not be turned over to the bungling neophytes or crude pulpiteer experimenters. In hypnotherapy ('mental therapeutics') we deal with a subtle as well as a powerful element, which must be used with great wisdom and extreme care. By its very nature it belongs largely to the realm of the 'unconscious,' so far as the patient is concerned. To exploit it in public places, with the blare of trumpets or noisy panegyrics—'come all ye that are sick and be mentally healed'—will cause more invalids to suffer fresh torments, and create more new invalids with serious disorders than many a fully qualified doctor can cure. At the present time the catchword of the Emmanuel Church movement is 'functional disease.' We hear it stated and see it in public print repeatedly, that the clerical healers will have nothing to do with any sufferer from organic disease, and they use their medically trained allies to separate the 'functional sheep' from the 'organic goats.' That the law forbids them to practise medicine is, of course, a detail of no importance. Just where and upon what authority certain good people of New York, Chicago, Boston, and elsewhere, attempt to draw the line between organic diseases and the 'functional' nervous disorders or how the functions of an organ of the body can be diseased without a prior involvement of the organ itself, is beyond reasonable understanding. Any untoward excitation or devitalization of the nutritive vital forces of any organ of the senses or the connective tissues does irreparable injury. Is there a physician, however skilled and experienced, who can correctly interpret the changes that ensue from pathologic processes of various

kinds, and say he is safe in the differentiation of the varying types of nervous maladies to map out in an 'off-hand' way the topographic peculiarities of morbid lesions? These extremes may graduate so insensibly into one another that it is impossible to separate them by any natural line of demarcation, as between the various organs of the body there exists both in health and disease, a correlation, the recognition of which is of the highest importance. So the pathologist, relying upon the laws of physiology which, although modified, are not suspended by disease, has learned that a disease commencing in one organ may involve widespread structural changes in other parts. However, if the limitations of this new form of Church work are duly appreciated,—confined to those psychic conditions usually met with in the now overcrowded psychopathic wards of a hospital, which rarely require for their cure other treatment than ordinary tact, conjoined with proper food, rest, and wholesome environs—good and not harm, may result by the method 'Christian psychology.' Hypnotism has its attendant dangers even when intelligently applied by a fully qualified physician, for hypnotic suggestion is not applicable in its safe and effective form to every one. Therefore, it is especially necessary, to the comfort and future welfare of patients who are suffering from the varying types of nervous maladies, the most distressing of diseases, that only such persons be put in charge who have carefully studied the clinical aspects and phases of neurotic manipulations, and who are able or readily willing to dissociate the 'spiritual' from the things that are essentially material."

2. That intercourse with the spirits of the séance-room, and belief in their mission are not for the moral and general good of mankind, is, in the second

place, evident from the effect of such intercourse upon the physical and moral condition of the medium and of the sitters. And it is simply incredible that a higher disclosure respecting man and his duty should come into the world by these means. Such an assumption is against the plain dictates of reason and of common-sense. For all experience proves that there can be no question as to the disastrous nature of these means, even though every effort be made to minimize the perils as far as possible. Scientific psychical reseachers and spiritists too, unfortunately, are apt not to tell the whole truth about the matter. They know full well how fatally they would damage their cause were they to do so; and, as a consequence, they seek for plausible ways of evading the difficulty.

"Either there was too frequent use of the psychic power, causing too great a drain on the strength of the medium; the sitters were not passive enough; or the intelligence manifesting happened to be unusually violent and unreasonable." By some such reasoning as this they attempt to conceal the real facts, and to throw dust into the eyes of the public. I will, therefore, quote the statements of unbiassed psychical students, who are committed to no particular theory, and also what mediums themselves have to say about the matter. What they assert will be confirmed by numerous "unscientific" experimenters.

Mr. Gilman Hall, one of the editors of *Everybody's Magazine*, sailed for Europe last May on a vacation. In his party of seven was his brother-in-law, Dr.

Herbert A. Moody, associate professor of chemistry in the College of the City of New York. Mr. Hall sought out Filippo Botazzi, professor of biology in the University of Naples, in an effort to secure some photographs. The offer of a séance with Madame Paladino came unexpectedly, and was gladly accepted. In his report of this remarkable séance, Mr. Gilman Hall writes as follows: "Prof. Botazzi's assistant brought Madame Paladino a cup of strong coffee. She seemed dazed and in real distress. Where she had seemed gracious before, she now seemed hardly to realize our presence. She showed many of the symptoms of a person in dire seasickness. She looked old and seamed and yellow. She seemed to have little strength left. She drank a little coffee, placed the cup on a shelf, crossed the room to a window opening on the garden, and vomited. Prof. Botazzi said she was always weak and nauseated after a sitting. We all stood about, and I for one felt like a guilty child. It seemed wrong that we should have caused this woman such sickness just to satisfy our curiosity and interest in psychical experiments. I gained an added respect for her from the thought of all she had been doing for years, at so heavy a cost, in her sittings for the various scientists. We waited perhaps twenty minutes, and then said our farewell to Madame Paladino—a farewell which she returned with a limp hand and an indifference strangely in contrast with her early greetings. Madame went out first. As we left the building, we passed her, leaning heavily on the arm of her husband, who had waited

for her outside, dragging herself slowly and painfully along the narrow lane which leads to one of those wonderful streets of steps in Naples which, in turn, gives on the larger street where the carriage waited."

According to the statements of Professors Marani and Patrizi, Zuccharini of Bologna, the levitation medium, "remembers absolutely nothing of the séances; they cause him, however, a great sense of weakness and a sort of cerebral evaporation which lasts all the following days."

In the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research (Part XXXIII., p. 408) the late Dr. Hodgson wrote:—

"Imperator claimed that the indiscriminate experimenting with Mrs. Piper's organism should stop, that it was a 'battered and worn' machine, and needed much repairing, that he, with his assistants (Doctor and Rector), would repair it as fast as possible, and that in the meantime other persons must be kept away."

At a sitting of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society,[1] held on June 22, 1869, Mr. D. D. Home was asked by Mr. Bennett: "What are your sensations when in a trance?" Reply: "I feel for two or three minutes in a dreamy state, then I become quite dizzy, and then I lose all consciousness. When I awake I find my feet and limbs quite cold, and it is difficult to restore the circulation.

[1] *Report on Spiritualism*, published in 1871.

When told of what has taken place in the trance it is quite unpleasant to me, and I ask those present not to tell me at once when I awake."

In reply to a question as to the difference between manifestation in and out of trance, Mr. H. replied: "In a trance I see spirits connected with those present. These spirits take possession of me; my voice is like theirs; I have a particularly mobile face, as you may see, and I sometimes take a sort of identity with the spirits, who are in communication through me. I attribute the mobility of my face, which is not natural, to the spirits. I may say I am exceedingly sick after elongations. (See *Demonology and Witchcraft*, by R. Brown.)

An interesting account of the performances of the Indian fakirs, which appeared in *Light* last year, and which is from the pen of an Indian judge, concludes with the following significant words: "About four years later he (the chief justice) visited the subterranean temple of Karli, where crowds of fakirs congregate, some of whom spend the whole of their time in corporeal mortification and mental contemplation, and gradually arrive at a state of emaciation bordering closely on death. All fakirs who strive to attain the highest transformations in the superior spheres, undergo these terrible mortifications and commit this protracted suicide. There the chief justice found Covindasamy in a state of almost complete insensibility. So, he says, 'decrepitude and imbecility appear to be the final end of all Hindu transformed fakirs.'"

The following letter appeared in the columns of the same journal not long ago :—

"THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY."

"Sir—May I, through the medium of your columns, ask a question which seems to be of crucial importance, and may I beg those of your readers who have the power to do so, to kindly give such information as they can upon the matter?

"How do 'Spiritualists' account for the decay of the sense of responsibility in those who give themselves to this cult? This loss of the sense of responsibility may be denied, but I do not speak as one who has dealt lightly with this matter.

"Meeting after meeting is held, and the reality of 'spirit presence' is 'proved' time after time to an incredulous, or a sceptical, or an enthusiastic audience, as the case may be. Persons of whose moral nature the devotees of the cult know absolutely nothing, are urged to develop mediumistic gifts. Classes are formed, by 'disinterested' leaders in the cult, for the development of these gifts—with fees 'paid in advance.' Circles are formed, and frequently persons are admitted to those circles who, by the law of affinity, can attract only the lying, revengeful, and unclean entities who seek, by these means, the prolongation of their term of gratification. The whole circle is thus drawn into magnetic affinity and nervous relationship with these devastating forces. They have formed a link which they are powerless to break. Little knowing the fate which has overtaken them, they gradually lose all sense of responsibility, even towards those whom they have sworn (by sacred and inviolable vows) to 'love, honour, and cherish' until death 'parts them.' They are no longer responsible human beings, and yet, as a result of the consummate deception and power of concealment of these obsessing entities, nobody dreams that they are entertaining in their midst demons who glory in wreckage

of human lives and of good causes. Nor does this infection confine itself to the members of the circle who 'believe in Spiritualism.' Persons who frequent the halls where these 'spirits' have their special meeting places, sometimes become drawn into the powerful, magnetic circle, unknown to all others except to those whose loving eyes watch and weep over their gradual enfoldment in an evil aura, which even love itself cannot penetrate, The hopeless, helpless sorrow and suffering of these watching eyes is doubly increased when they find that those who urge with much fervour, the extension of this 'spirit communion,' have no remedy to offer. They do not even seem to recognize that they—the inciting mediums or agents—are the persons responsible for this moral and spiritual wreckage of human souls. Appeals are made to these 'Spiritualists' to repair the wreckage they have made. And before the storm they have evoked, they stand helpless—powerless to aid those whom they have incited to their own irretrievable ruin (or careless of it.)

"May I ask the thoughtful followers of this most dangerous—'game of chance'—how do they account for this loss of the sense of responsibility? Is it true that presumably wise and clever persons still urge others to cultivate a high state of magnetic susceptibility, knowing that the dangers are greater than the supposed benefits, and that they—the investigators—can set up no safeguards, offer no remedy, when the ruin is complete?

"One might as well push a child down a steep incline into a burning fiery furnace, and then decline all responsibility."

"MOURNER."

Prof. Barrett, while insisting upon the right of science to investigate the phenomena, and while realizing the importance of their bearing upon the great subject of the future life, is, nevertheless, constrained to utter the following warnings:—

"It is, of course, as true now as then (the times of the Hebrews) that these practices are dangerous in proportion as they lead us to surrender our reason or our will to the dictates of an invisible and oftentimes masquerading spirit, or as they absorb and engross us to the neglect of our daily duties, or as they tempt us to forsake the sure but arduous pathway of knowledge and of progress for an enticing maze, which lures us round and round. In fine, everything that invades the domain of reason and tends to displace it from its throne was condemned by these virile, far-seeing prophets. We can hear them saying, 'Away with your portents and charms, away with your superstitious rites and observances, away with your slavery to muttering spirits, and fight the battle of life with the reason the Almighty has given you and in the consciousness and strength of His presence.'[1]

"It is this weakening of the sense of personal responsibility that constitutes, in my opinion, the chief peril of spiritualism. Hence your gates need to be guarded with jealous care; even the level-headed should walk warily, and the excitable and emotional should have nothing to do with it; for the fascination of the subject is like a candle to moths, it attracts and burns the silly, the credulous, and the crazy."[2]

"The subject (spiritualism)," says another writer,[3] "strange to say, seemed to have the power of intro-

[1] *Necromancy and Ancient Magic.*
[2] *On the Threshold of a New World of Thought.*
[3] Hubbel: *Facts and Fancy in Spiritualism.*

ducing discord in every family into which it entered, of arraying husband against wife in the divorce court, and of producing all manner of domestic infelicity and sexual irregularities. This is a rather strange result of the belief that we are surrounded by the spirits of our beloved dead who see all we do."

"The modern spirit-culture," writes a German bishop, "is the death of all genuine Christian culture."

It seems to me that intelligent men, whose minds are not held by established preconceptions and by fixed habits of thought, and who are still capable of estimating the force of evidence, can scarcely fail to be impressed with the arguments and statements which I have brought forward. It will be noticed that practically all my statements are fortified by the testimony of persons who are intimately acquainted with spiritualism and psychical research, and most of whom have no particular religious creed or position to defend. When these arguments and statements are weighed as a whole, they will be seen to be utterly destructive of the claims of the modern spiritistic theory. For reasons clearly and incontrovertibly shown, these claims cannot be sustained on any ground and from any point of view. Whatever the spirit-intelligences, concerned in the matter, may be, they are manifestly not what they claim to be, and the effect of their coming and operations are not for the good of mankind.

But supposing for a moment that it be otherwise, and that the fundamental claims of the spiritistic

theory could be admitted, in what sense is the arrogant claim of spiritists justified when it is asserted that it is a step in advance of the belief and practices of orthodox Christians? We are here, too, in the presence of bold statements and of wild assertions, the utter worthlessness of which becomes apparent immediately they are really examined. For when all is said and done, and we admit, for argument's sake, all that the modern spiritist claims, in what sense does his view of the spiritual world and his practice of its invocation give him an advantage over the orthodox Christian?

The Catholic believer addresses himself to and invokes Jesus Christ and His Mother, and the noble army of martyrs and saints. Whether Christ was God or not, and whether the belief held by those who followed in His steps was correct or not, it is admitted by all rational persons, that these were the purest and noblest of spirits that ever lived and functioned in a human body. As they lived and died for the highest welfare of man we may, on spiritistic principles, conclude that they continue their interest in the spheres which they now inhabit, and that they exercise their beneficent influences and powers on man's behalf. They are surely ever ready to respond to his invocations, to aid him in his upward struggles, and to implant into his soul pure and holy desires. The earth-life of these holy intelligences has abundantly proved that they may safely be invoked and trusted. We are, therefore, altogether justified in seeking communion with them.

The spiritist, on the other hand, invokes and holds communion with intelligences of whom he knows nothing at all, whom he cannot identify, who, in a thousand instances, as he himself admits, play him false, who are often proved to personate the dead—who have nothing of any intellectual or moral value to communicate, and who, on the free admission of scientists and spiritists alike, have contributed nothing whatever to the true progress and advancement of the race.

One utterly fails to see how the modern cult, even when looked at with spiritistic eyes, can be shown to be higher, either in aim or effect, than that which is practised in the Catholic Church. Who would not prefer to see his children under the influence of the former rather than of the latter? The stilted talk of progress and enlightenment, supposed to be due to this new teaching, is all mere empty verbiage, the hollowness and meaninglessness of which are seen the moment it is really examined and analyzed.

The advantage and greater reasonableness of the Catholic practice must be recognized by any intelligent person, who will think the matter over impartially, and who will not allow himself to be misled by mere high-sounding phrases.

Speaking for myself I may say, without hesitation, that even if I were not a Catholic, and not even a Christian, if I felt the need of invoking or of putting myself under the influence of unseen spirit-agencies, I would infinitely prefer to address

myself to those, the record of whose noble and dignified life is before me, than to come in any kind of contact with that host of gibbering spirits, who play harmoniums, move furniture, spell out ouija messages, or who, as in the case of the high and lofty ones, convey information, which, because of its contradictory character, is no information at all. That reflecting persons cannot see all this is evidence to me that the spirit of evil and of darkness is about in the world, and that the modern mind loves to be gulled and to be misled in these matters.

It is sometimes claimed that the phenomena of spiritism have had the effect of producing belief in another world, and of even making men Christians. But in view of what has already been said, it will be seen, that even though this claim be admitted, it does not alter the facts of the case.

There is no moral advantage in the mere belief that there is another world and another life. Very few intelligent people doubt this. The lowest savage believes it. It benefits them little unless they have, concerning that world, the right kind of belief, and both the desire and the determination to make the right kind of connection with it. The other-world-view presented by spiritism, is scarcely calculated to produce exalted notions respecting this future world and its life.

And the same holds good as regards the belief in Christianity which is produced by psychical phenomena. We know to-day what kind of Christianity it is that belief in these manifestations

creates. It is a Gospel with the Gospel left out; a "reconstruction" of Christian thought from which all the essential elements of original Christianity have disappeared. And this leads me to the consideration of another aspect of the subject, which should demand our closest attention, since it is another means by which the modern spiritistic philosophy is increasingly entrapping unwary souls.

I have, in preceding paragraphs, referred to the "reconstruction" of Christian thought which spiritistic writers and some scientific men, either explicitly or by suggestion and inference, here and there, are attempting on the basis of ascertained psychical phenomena. They are never tired of pointing out that a certain kind of parallelism exists between the abnormal manifestations which took place in Christ's days and in those of the Apostles and Disciples and of their saintly followers, and the phenomena which occur to-day in the presence of psychics and mediums. And it is inferred from this parallelism, that all these phenomena are of the same order and have an identical source; in other words, that Christ was in reality a higher kind of medium, through Whom psychic forces operated, and Who, by reason of his intimate knowledge of these forces, controlled and manipulated them in a higher degree than any medium known in modern days.

It was due, it is urged, to the ignorance of these matters, prevailing in that age, that quite an unreasonable importance was attached to these phenomena, and that there was built up upon them

that complex dogmatic system, which is the basis of Catholicism to-day.

We are thus, it is asserted, for the first time in its history, beginning to understand what Christianity really is, and it may be assumed that this elaborate dogmatic system will disappear when these phenomena, and the laws which govern them, are better understood, and when we know how we in our day may call them into operation.

This parallelism, thus ingeniously constructed, has about it an air of exceeding plausibility, and it is certain that by it thousands of unwary minds are being led astray. It occurs to few minds to examine this supposed parallelism more closely, and to inquire how far it can be shown to be constructed upon fact and truth.

It is thus claimed that Christ was a true psychic. He passed long hours in a trance-state; a state in which His mind was absorbed in communion with the Infinite. He saw heaven opened and beheld things which ordinary eyes cannot see. He had visions of angels and of devils. He performed miracles by the laying-on of hands, or at His word and at a distance. He experienced the phenomena of levitation by walking on the sea. He was not only clairvoyant, but also clairaudient, knowing and seeing what was going on in distant places and reading even the unexpressed thoughts of others. He had control over his "astral" body, performing not only the miracle of transfiguration, but also appearing in that body after his resurrection. He was able, by His prophetic insight, to foretell events

likely to happen in the future. He was, above all things, a great healing medium, able by His mere touch or by contact with His person and His very garments, to cure the most terrible diseases and even to raise the (apparently) dead to life again. He had, in short, an organism through which psychic forces operated most freely, and by means of which He was able to produce, in an infinitely more intense degree than ordinary psychics, all those abnormal manifestations which occur to-day and which the best science has admitted to be facts.

And the same parallelism, it is maintained, can be traced throughout the entire Christian record, and in the occurrences taking place after Christ's death. Thus the assembly of the Apostles, in the upper chamber where they were all "with one accord," was nothing more than a good séance, at which all the conditions were favourable, and at which, as a consequence, all the phenomena occurred which occur at spiritistic gatherings to-day: the rushing mighty wind, the cloven tongues, the speaking with tongues, the elevation of the mind to a condition in which unseen things and higher truths can be perceived.

And psychic gifts and powers were then imparted to the Apostles; they were given the power of healing, of understanding and interpreting unknown tongues, the gift of clairvoyance, of the discerning of spirits, of the casting out or "controlling" of evil agencies.

The Catholic priest, therefore, to-day, succeeding

to the Apostles, is to all intents and purposes a spirit-medium. It is through his agency that the spirit of Christ continues to operate upon the souls and bodies of men, and that moral and physical cures are wrought. It is through his hands that the psychic power flows, and it is by prayer and meditation, by mortification and penance, that he brings the coarser elements of his body into subjection, and qualifies himself for his transcendental work. It is by sacramental signs and symbols that he puts himself and the faithful into actual "rapport" with the great Initiate or Master, Who devised or instituted them.

Thus, in the lives of the saints and martyrs and devotees of every order and in every age of the Church's history, similar psychic developments have taken place, and, as a consequence, similar phenomena have occurred, the phraseology used in connection with them alone being different from that employed by the modern spiritist. And these phenomena, it is maintained, are bound to occur wherever the same psychic conditions are observed, and the same law of psychic development is obeyed. The spiritist, therefore, and the modern man of science, being so much wiser and more enlightened, as a matter of fact enjoy all the privileges which the devout Catholic enjoys, plus the unspeakable privilege of being free from dogmatic restraints, from the necessity of conceding exclusive knowledge and privileges to a clerical and narrow-minded cast, and of submitting to a thousand irksome Church

duties and responsibilities. He enjoys all that the Church enjoys, except that he calls it by a different name, and that he has a much larger sphere of operation; and he is content to labour and to wait until the great multitude shall have recognized this fact, and until "the narrow dogmatism of the past shall have gone forever."

We have, in this brief summary, the ideas and suggestions which are being set in motion by the masters of the modern psychic cult to-day, and if I may judge from current literature and from the letters which are constantly reaching me, they are finding a responsive echo in many minds, and there are signs that in some instances they are instrumental in deceiving "even the elect." Never, probably, in the history of Christianity, has a more subtle delusion been conceived and propagated, and never has Revealed Truth encountered a more deadly and dangerous foe.

At the very outset of our closer inquiry into this matter we are met by the striking fact that the advent of this extraordinary delusion was foretold by our Lord and by some of the Apostles, and was warned against all these centuries ago. I would ask the reader to ponder over the statements contained in passages such as:—

S. Matthew, xxiv, 23 et seq.

1 S. Tim., iv, 1-3.

1 S. John, iv, 1-3.

They will be seen to have a striking significance

when they are examined in the light of the teaching of modern spiritism respecting the person of Jesus Christ; and the fact of their utterance, so many years ago, is remarkable enough to arrest the attention of even those who cannot honestly call themselves Christians. In the modern attack on the very central dogma of the Christian Faith, these prophecies and warnings find a very startling fulfilment.[1]

It is needless to say that upon closer examination this plausibly constructed parallelism dissolves itself away, and the entire system of thought constructed upon it, is seen to be a baseless fabrication. What one marvels at in contemplating it, is the nefarious manner in which even scientific men will manipulate facts, and by what devices they will trick a credulous and gullible public. It is a veritable case of Haeckel in the sphere of psychical research!

For when we turn to the actual facts and occurrences, not as they present themselves in imaginative brains, but as they are recorded in the New Testament, we find no traces at all of this supposed parallelism.

Christ, although declared to be the highest medium, said not a single word about His mediumship throughout the whole of His life. Although knowing the craving of the human heart for intercourse with the unseen world, for news of friends passed into it, for certainty of their continued

[1] See also the *Book of Deuteronomy*, xviii. 9-12.

existence, He uttered not a syllable from which it could be inferred that He meant this craving to be satisfied by psychic experiment. He never formed a circle Himself, nor did He give instruction how it was to be formed, what conditions were to be observed, how the dangers, incidental to these experiments, were to be guarded against. He did not even faintly suggest that men were foolish to weep over their lost ones, since sensible assurance of their continued existence was so easily obtainable. He worked all His miracles in the light of day, in the full consciousness of the power which was in Him, and from no utterance of His can any rational mind infer that He attributed His power to any cause other than His intimate mysterious union with His Father. And it was by virtue of their union with Him, by a holy and supernatural life, that His Apostles were promised their possession and exercise.

And there was, in the working of His miracles, no element of doubt or uncertainty, no notion of attempting something which might possibly prove a failure. He had no need of a circle, of "conditions," of a dark room. All was done with calmness, with conscious power and dignity. He spoke a mere word, and even the natural elements obeyed Him. An inward moral and permanent renewal, moreover, attended his cure of physical disease. Indeed, a higher moral and spiritual aim always underlay the mere outward relief.

And it was by the same method and in the same

manner that the Apostles and saints worked their miracles and effected their cures. It was not by the exercise of any power of their own, by any kind of forced psychic "development," or by the pursuit of occult practices, but by prayer and by the invocation of the name of Christ that they accomplished these things.

Again, our Lord never once invoked the spirits of the dead, or led any one to suppose, even from an incidental statement, that we should or may invoke them. On the contrary, when spirits spoke to Him in human language and through the mouths of the obsessed or possessed ("controlled," as the spiritists term it to-day), He declined to have converse with them; *He rebuked them and cast them out*, even though they admitted His sanctity and proclaimed His divinity.

And what likeness is there between the cultivation of mediumship and that holy submission and passivity which the Christian exercises towards Christ and His ordinances, and towards those who stand in His place to-day? Mediumship, as we have seen, exhausts and demoralizes, and produces many physical and mental evils; if long persisted in and extensively cultivated, it degrades and debases and causes complete constitutional collapse. All experienced investigators admit this.

Christian passivity, on the other hand, spending itself in prayer and meditation and holy exercises, ennobles and elevates and enriches the mind, moulds and strengthens the character, and forms the soul in

the likeness of the Divine Master. The most persistent and sustained cultivation of this power, so far from injuring the subject, intensifies all these beneficent effects, and increasingly spiritualizes both the body and the soul. It ever tends to make a man healthier and happier, more ready to bear the burdens of life, more cheerful under suffering, more anxious to devote himself to the service of his fellows.

"When the Lord comes in His gracious visitations all is sweetness and peace. No disturbance of the physical system, no whirling or howling, no storm or tempest, no wringing or twisting of the arms and legs, no violent or indecent postures, no abnormal development or exercise of the faculties mark the incoming of the Holy Ghost. All is calm and serene, the understanding is illuminated, the heart is warmed, the will is strengthened, and the whole soul is elevated by the infusion of a supernatural grace. There is no crisis, no forgetfulness or awakening from a trance.

"But whenever it is the reverse, whenever there is violence, distortion, quaking, trembling, and disturbance, we know that if any spirit is present, it is an evil spirit, which delights in violence and disorder, and displays power without love, force without goodness, knowledge without gentleness."[1]

Who, we may justly ask, but the wilfully blind or perverse can trace any kind of legitimate connection between the former state and the latter, or can claim that the phenomena produced in these

[1] Brownson: *Spirit Rapper.*

respective states are identical in their source and nature?

Again what parallel is there between the phenomena of the séance-room and those which take place and have taken place in the lives of the saints? In the first case, as already pointed out, the phenomena are *invoked* with deliberate purpose and intent, and from mere motives of curiosity. The beings who respond to these invocations are frivolous and tricky; they personate the dead, and are almost always telling falsehoods. They cannot or will not tell us who they are, and their coming has never a permanently elevating effect on the experimenter. They always and everywhere deny the truths of the historic Christian Faith.

In the latter case the manifestations occur *spontaneously*, without the aid of a circle or medium or "conditions." They are not invited or desired by the saint, and he cannot control them. They occur in accordance with some law of God, which is unknown to us, and there is generally connected with their occurrence some kind of beneficial moral purpose or aim. Never at any time in the Church's history has a spirit, thus appearing to the living, denied the truth of Catholic doctrine, or declared, like some recent personations of deceased English ecclesiastics, that they have, in the spirit-spheres, discovered their error and have returned in order that they may set the world right and free it from its dogmatic burdens. (And surely even the non-Christian student of our literature must admit that

there are, in the lives of the saints, records of what they would term to-day "veridical-manifestations.") Always and everywhere, by the spoken word and by other indications, have they confirmed the truth of that doctrine, the responsibilities its acceptance involves, the grave consequences incidental to a deliberate rejection of the means of grace. Always and everywhere have they exhorted to continuance of belief in and obedience to that doctrine.

Here, too, there is not a shadow of similarity between the respective manifestations. On the contrary, all the facts point to the inference that they do not proceed from the same source.

I have, in this brief examination of the subject, guarded against anything like over-statement or forced inference, and I have omitted much that may, in fairness, be urged in support of my argument. I am anxious to construct that argument upon the facts alone, not upon any deduction that may be due to deep personal religious convictions. And I feel confident that these facts, when they are fully considered will be seen to be very forcible and significant in their nature.

We have, in this ingenious handling of the subject, on the part of modern spiritists and experimenters, evidence how preconceived and favourite theories are apt to "hold" the mind, and how loosely some men will manipulate their material. And how few are there who will take the trouble to examine and verify for themselves, and who will endeavour to ascertain how far the actual facts support bold

assertions of this nature! It is astonishing to think that a mere superficial likeness existing between certain kinds of phenomena, should lead serious minds to such unwarrantable assumptions and conclusions. But it is more astonishing still to find that there are thoughtful men and women who will calmly allow these assumptions to pass muster.

During my recent stay in North America, I was immensely interested to find that the late Dr. Orestes Brownson, America's Catholic philosopher, whom I have already quoted, had, in his investigations of spiritistic phenomena, and in his examination of the various theories of their interpretation, come to conclusions which are identical with my own.

"The man," he says, "who can detect any relation between the two classes of facts, but that of dissimilarity and contrast, is the very man to believe in the spirit-revelations, to mistake evil for good, darkness for light, and the devil for God. We find both classes of facts in the New Testament. The Christian miracles are all marked by an air of quiet power. There is no bluster, no rage, no foaming at the mouth, no fierceness of look or gesture, no falling or rending, as in the case of the demoniacs, and no rapping, no table-tipping, no antics, no stammering, no half utterances, no convulsions, no disturbances, as in the case of the spirit-manifestations described by Mr. Owen in his books. In the one case all is calm and serene, pure and holy; there is no effort, no straining, but a simple normal exercise of power. Our Lord rebukes the wind and

the waves and there comes a great calm; He speaks, the leper is cleansed, the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dead live. What like this is there in Mr. Owen's ghastly narratives of trances, thundering noises and haunted houses? Every one of his narratives shows, as far as it shows anything not explicable by simple psychic states and powers, the marks which the Church has always regarded as signs of the presence of the devil. Some of the cases he describes are clearly cases of possession, and others are as clearly cases of obsession. Unhappily, Mr. Owen, who formerly believed in no God, now takes, knowingly or not, the devil to be God."[1]

"Undoubtedly," says Dr. Brownson at another place, "the supposed dead bring pretended proofs of their identity, but these proofs are in no wise conclusive. They remind you of peculiarities which the dead and you alone knew; the mysterious pencil imitates his writing. But the devils were invisible witnesses of those peculiarities; doubtless they can skilfully counterfeit handwriting, they who work prodigies much more extraordinary. And they know enough of the human heart to know that in persuading you a loved one is there conversing with you, they will secure a better hearing, when, with pretended simplicity, they boldly declare that Catholic teaching is deceptive. These invisible interlocutors take the most august names, such as that of St. Louis and even of St. Paul, and under these names, they contradict the faith of St. Louis

[1] *Spirit Rapper*, p. 360.

and the teaching of St. Paul, and repeat, like parrots, the humanitarian phrases of our modern philosophers. But history shows that there have been authentic apparitions of the glorious dead, attested by miracles; not one of them declared that he was mistaken when he believed and taught Catholic dogmas during his mortal life. What matters it, then, that these late comers, who, taking at random the names of our saints and those of the heroes of free-thought, emphatically proclaim some errors resuscitated before them by a dozen scribblers notoriously unbelieving?

"To conjure up the pretended souls of the departed dead is an old Pagan practice that was punished with death in the legislation dictated by God to Moses. Had it been the will of Providence to authorize this intercourse with the world beyond the grave, it would have, assuredly, determined the conditions thereof, mankind would have known them, and not have been reduced to these suspicious and unwarranted manœuvres, which can only give our souls doubt, trouble, and the most terrible agitation."

3. When, in view of what a closer examination of the matter has thus disclosed, we come to the question as to the real interpretation of these abnormal manifestations the subject assumes a very grave aspect, and it becomes necessary to carefully weigh every word that is uttered. On the other hand, a reflecting mind can scarcely fail to discover for itself what that interpretation must necessarily be. There

is, in my own mind, no doubt whatever on this point, and I may claim to have studied the subject diligently, with all the evidence before me, in many lands, and for many years. The modern spirit-manifestations are, in my opinion, not phenomena parallel with those which attended the advent of the Christian Religion, but they are *travesties* of those phenomena and of the mysteries of the Catholic Faith. And whether or not there be a deliberate personal aim or purpose behind them, and whether or not the souls of depraved human beings be mixed up with them, they are in their effect, beyond all doubt, a means by which the truths of Revelation are subverted, and by which the soul is effectually separated from the source of supernatural life. It is an adroit substitution of the preternatural for the supernatural. Instead of connecting man with that true other-world-order for which he was created, it connects him with unclean and evil spirits, hostile alike to the Divine Redeemer and to the work and mission of His Church in the world.

I am persuaded that, unpalatable and unscientific as this conclusion seems, it is one which is inevitable in view of *all* the facts of the case, and it is one which will be increasingly forced upon thoughtful minds, as these subtle manifestations come to be better understood, and as men become more willing to face and examine the actual facts.

Some scientific men are already incidentally bearing witness to the accuracy of this conclusion, and I am confident that they would speak with still

greater emphasis, did they devote more study to the *moral* aspect of the matter, instead of merely hunting for evidence of identity.

For myself, it is certain that the key to the true solution of the psychic mystery is in the hands of the Church, and not in those of science; and that science, without the aid of the Church, will never succeed in finding it.

It will interest thoughtful readers to know that almost all modern forms of spirit-manifestation which are perplexing the scientific world to-day, and which some very imperfectly-informed psychical investigators are claiming as great discoveries, have been known to the Catholic Church for centuries. They have, in every age, been observed and recorded, and there has never been any serious doubt as to their ultimate source. What modern research pronounces to be the display of hitherto unknown human powers and faculties, and evidence of the continued action of the dead, the Church proclaims to be the criteria of demonic invasion. For the guidance of exorcists she enumerated these criteria as follows:—

1. The power of knowing the unexpressed thoughts of others.

2. The understanding of unknown languages.

3. The power of speaking unknown or foreign languages.

4. The knowledge of future events.

5. The knowledge of things passing in distant places.

6. The exhibition of superior physical strength.

7. The suspension of the body in the air during a considerable time.

The Church, therefore, it will be seen, while showing her intimate knowledge of these phenomena, puts a very different construction upon them, and we may surely reasonably assume, considering her vast and complex experience, that this construction is based upon accurate knowledge of all the facts, and upon observation. It is because the modern investigator lacks this experience on the moral side, and this accurate knowledge of all the facts, that he draws such false and one-sided conclusions, and that he is so rash in the matter of his theories. That these theories are accepted by so many intelligent persons is due to the circumstances that the evidence is judiciously manipulated by a deliberate omission of, or a very casual reference to this graver aspect of the matter.

How accurately the saints were acquainted with these phenomena, and how carefully they studied them in their effect upon man's moral and spiritual nature, is evident from their writings, and it is simply to profound ignorance of these writings, on the part of our modern scientific students of the subject, that their charge of obscurantism, as regards the Catholic Church, is due.

In an introductory essay on *The Psychology of the Saints*,[1] we read that, "St. Theresa, while analyzing these phenomena, repeatedly states that

[1] M. Joly.

they do not all come from God; but that they are frequently caused by the devil and the weakness of our own nature. Her great friend, St. John of the Cross, insists even more strongly on this point: that visions, revelations, and all exterior phenomena, like suspensions and the stigmata, are graces which are subject to a thousand dangers, imitations, and delusions."

And if this was their view respecting spontaneous and uninvited manifestations, what, we may ask, would they have thought of those of the modern séance-room?

A more modern writer, M. Alfred Maury, a well-read man and a psychologist, confirms this. In his treatise on *Beatification and Canonization*, he distinguishes three kinds of ecstasy:—

1. Natural ecstasy, which is a malady.
2. Diabolical ecstasy.
3. Divine ecstasy.

"In divine ecstasy," he says, "the soul in the end finds herself more free, more full of peace, and stronger, and the body shares in this complete recovery of health."

But that, in the true interpretation of these things, other elements, besides scientific observation, must enter in, was already discerned by accurate thinkers, long before the dawn of the Christian era.

"The soul of a holy man," says the author of the *Book of Ecclesiasticus*,[1] "discovereth sometimes true

[1] Chap. xxxvii. 18.

things, more than seven watchmen that sit in a high place to watch."

There are, moreover, in the present rationalistic age, too, many persons who are evidently not satisfied with the plausible, popular theories, advanced in explanation of these phenomena, and who, on the ground of personal experience, have serious misgivings respecting the matter.

In a recent issue of the spiritistic journal, *Light*, a distressed inquirer asks the following question :—

"What guarantee have we that satan, who is transformed into an 'angel of light,' may not be personating the departed? Is not this possible and probable? This supposition may account for the supposed spiritual absence of a devil among Spiritualists." To which *Light* replies :—

"There is but one answer ;—No guarantees can be given in this matter of spirit-communion. There are only trusts and probabilities. But, in truth, are we very much better off in relation to the visible world? Are there no demons in the flesh, in London and elsewhere, who masquerade as 'angels of light,' and who personate beyond all possibility of detection? Devils! Oh, yes, there are plenty even in this centre of civilization.

"How then do we guard, or try to guard, against these? By using our judgment, by standing on our guard, and by the good old rule, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' As for the unseen frauds, we can, at all events, believe that we are not left to combat them unaided. On this imperfect earth, we trust largely to detectives and the police. Why not

do the same as to the unseen? It is an absurdity and a gross mistrusting of God to suppose that we are left a prey to 'the devil and his angels.' No; but there is law beyond the veil, and there must be guardians and administrators of the law there, whose business it is to safeguard us. People talk loosely about 'infidelity': but there is no infidelity like the infidelity of excluding God from the spirit's life: and we do exclude Him in proportion as we assume that 'satan' can do as he likes with us."

But a moment's thought must surely exhibit the utter fallacy which underlies this method of reasoning. For it is here not a question of forces which unbidden invade our life, but of processes and operations which are deliberately sought and invited, and for the effective control of which we can scarcely expect "the interference of the guardians and administrators of the law beyond the veil." St. Peter Chrysologus says: "He who pretends to amuse himself with the devil, shall not rejoice with Christ."

To my own mind it is certain that the leaders of this new spiritistic and psychic thought-movement are playing with subtle and dangerous forces, the nature of which they do not in the least understand, and for the accurate examination and interpretation of which they lack the necessary wider knowledge and qualifications. They are investigating in a sphere in which their scientific methods are wholly inadequate, and in which they can never hope to accomplish more than ascertain the actual occurrence of phenomena which leave tangible and per-

manent traces of their occurrence, and from which they can determine that an extraneous intelligent agency is at work. The mystery which lies behind these phenomena—the nature and aim of the intelligence—must obviously remain beyond their ken, or can, at best, be a mere matter of conjecture. The solution of that mystery lies within a sphere in which Revelation and the experience of centuries, alone can be our guide.

What Revelation has to say about the matter is sufficiently known; what experience has to tell us I have tried to set forth in detail in the preceding pages.

And when all this mass of experience is sifted and summarized, the inevitable inference to be drawn from it becomes only too apparent, difficult and perplexing as such an inference may at first sight appear to the modern mind. It is unquestionably one strangely in accordance with the Church's unvarying teaching that, by reason of the Fall, man has passed under the influence of the evil spirit, and that this dominion consists in his power "*to molest and vex man in divers ways, and to turn his victim into a tool or instrument through which he produces very strange and startling effects.*"

I cannot help feeling that when all the facts of the case are thus carefully examined and considered *in all their bearings and from every point of view*, even the non-Christian student of the subject must admit that the Catholic Church has by far the best of the argument in the matter. That this is not more fully

and universally recognized at present is, as I have already stated, owing to the circumstance that much important evidence in connection with this enquiry is ignored or suppressed, and that the enquiry is in many respects an altogether one-sided one. That this will be universally conceded when this important evidence becomes better known, and is more carefully studied, I am confident.

Two facts, clearly, my examination of the subject will be admitted to have established, and I may well leave it to the thoughtful reader to study them in their relation to what the Catholic Church teaches on the subject. There is, as I think I have shown conclusively, abundant and well-supported evidence respecting them.

1. Malign and evil agencies exist in the unseen, and they are able, under certain conditions, to affect human life and thought.

Lest this all-important fact should be doubted or ignored, or even lightly treated, or in the end imagined to be no fact at all, I will once more, even at the risk of proving wearisome to some of my readers, quote from the writings of other thinkers and students of the subject, both on the Catholic and the non-Catholic side. It is the immense importance and urgency of the subject, and the utter misconceptions entertained respecting it, that lead me to thus emphasize my facts and to present all the evidence in the least calculated to impress them upon the mind.

In the fifth century, St. Augustine, one of the greatest geniuses the world has ever seen, wrote in the immortal book of "The Confessions"[1]: "Many people desirous of returning to Thee, O Lord, and being unable of themselves, have recourse to pure[2] spirits, and, falling into the desire of curious visions, deserve to become the sport of illusions. Being proud, they sought Thee, swelling out, rather than striking their breasts, and then they found, in the ways of pride, those powers of the air, who were to deceive them by the employment of their magic power. The devil transformed himself into an angel of light. That false mediator, whom the secret judgment of God permits to seduce the proud, has sin in common with man; and, being clothed in a mortal body, he would fain appear eternal, like God; but the true Mediator, whom the humble know well how to recognize, is Jesus Christ, mortal with men, just with God."

"We are living," says a modern theological writer, "in a perfect atmosphere of invisible and spiritual enemies, who disturb nature, thwart the providential direction of things, play foully on our imaginations, trouble our peace and try to pervert our reason. They meddle with everything that is of use to men and endeavour to mar its purposes. They infect every place in which they tempt and seduce him —from his own dwelling to the house of God itself. Earth and air and water are equally their elements. The first is shaken and convulsed, the second is

[1] X., 42, 43.
[2] Spirits not inhabiting flesh.

darkened by thunder-clouds and tortured into whirlwinds, the third is lashed into billows by their permitted but most malicious agency.

In a report of the London Dialectical Society (published in 1871) which had made it its business to investigate the phenomena taking place in the presence of the famous medium, D. D. Home, a Mr. Chevalier, who had had seventeen years' experience in spiritism, wrote : " My opinion of these phenomena is that the intelligence which is put in communication with us, is a fallen one. It is of the devil, the prince of the power of the air. I believe we commit the crime of necromancy, when we take part in these spiritualistic séances."

Mr. Wesley inserted in his Armenian Magazine for January, 1871, strange accounts of Swedenborg, while lodging in Mr. Brockmer's house. He seems to have been entranced or controlled by demons, for " he foamed at the mouth and made otherwise a frightful appearance."

" A reliable correspondent, who is a Catholic convert from Hinduism, sends us[1] the following communication :—

" ' We Indians are not in the least taken aback when we read of such strange happenings as you publish in some recent issues of the *Examiner*, so frequently do they occur in our midst. We have what you call spiritistic mediums, pythonic spirits, cases of demoniacal possession, of incubus, stone

[1] *Bombay Examiner*, March 13, 1909.

throwing, noon-day devils, seizing boys and killing them, persons being carried from one place to another or thrown into a desert, etc., etc. Then we have what they call jinais—men who pretend to cast out devils. In this town of Hyderabad, not very long ago, there lived a Brahmin who was a powerful jinai. He was supposed to be in league with the devil, and would often induce a wicked spirit to catch hold of the daughter or daughter-in-law of a rich merchant. When all other means to cast him out would fail, the Brahmin would be requisitioned as a last resource, and he would drive away the devil by his incantations and get a handsome reward for his pains. It is a common belief that the fate of a jinai is most miserable, and such a one always dies avagatio—as we Catholics would say "in a state of mortal sin"—and wanders about as a pret (ghost). The above exorcist is reported to have died such a death: for when his end approached no one would approach him, and he lay in his house two days before his body was removed to the burning ground.'"

"It is sorrowfully admitted," writes Dr. Peebles, "that there are public teachers who teach that there is no evil in this or the future life—all is right, all is good, say they. What is termed evil is only 'undeveloped good,' which logic continued compels us to say that a purposed lie is undeveloped truth — and a rape undeveloped virtue. These doctrines are the dogmas of darkest demons."[1]

[1] *The Demonism of the Ages*, p. 251.

"That these influences (in haunted houses) are at times malign and evil, cannot be doubted by anyone who has examined the mass of evidence that exists upon the subject."[1]

Spiritualists themselves have not been without suspicion of an agency wholly evil. Prof. Alfred R. Wallace writes:—

"When the influence (on the medium) is violent or painful, the effects are such as have been in all ages imputed to possession by evil spirits.[2]

Of the votaries of spiritualism "there are few who have not at some time felt impelled to leave it alone and have nothing more to do with it."[3]

"There are more plausible reasons than many imagine," once wrote Mr. Owen, "for the opinions entertained by some able men, Protestants as well as Catholics, that the communications in question come from the powers of darkness, and that 'we are entering on the first steps of a career of demoniac manifestation, the issues whereof men cannot conjecture.'"[4]

A writer in the *Occult Review*,[5] apparently a spiritualist, and in any case one who has had considerable experience in practical spiritism, incidentally makes the following admission:—Those who have had experience of spiritualism are well aware

[1] Hereward Carrington: *The Coming Science.*
[2] *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 202.
[3] M. and Dr. Theobald: *Address before London Spiritualistic Association*, November, 1888.
[4] *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, p. 38.
[5] *Glimpses of the Unseen*, by R. B. Span.

of the unseen dangers that surround us and lie in wait for the unwary and those who transgress, especially the awful peril of obsession by evil spirits.

"In the time of Jesus, the Christ, demoniacal possession was a well-known and dreaded fact, and several instances are recorded of the Master using His divine power in casting out the evil spirits which had obsessed unfortunate human beings. Nowadays the world ridicules the idea of unseen beings being able to control the organism of mortals—in fact, doubts if there are any unseen intelligences; but the fact remains that the spirit-world is very close to this one, and is the only real and enduring world; and the inhabitants thereof can and do control and influence human beings for good or evil, happiness or woe.

"We are surrounded by all sorts of spiritual beings, from the highest angels of light to the most debased and brutal demons of darkness, and there is an increasing conflict between the powers of good and evil, light and darkness."

"Mr. T.," says the writer in the course of his narrative, "was particularly liable to anything of that kind (possession), *being a good trance medium*. It was two weeks before he quite recovered from the shock and strain he then underwent."

Mr. Span concludes his article with this statement: "Such cases are the worst 'glimpses of the unseen' I have to record, and prove that mankind has some very dangerous and powerful enemies behind the veil."

In a paper[1] by Dr. Frederic Van Eeden, a well-known and experienced member of the Society for Psychical Research, the following statement occurs:

"I have found it very difficult to theoretically contravene the opinion that neither telepathy nor clairvoyance exist as personal faculties, but that all is the work of spirits. According to this opinion —which is maintained by men of high intelligence, such as Russel Wallace—spirits surround us always and in all places, and (not having anything more pressing to occupy them), are constantly employed communicating to us impulses, ideas, and fancies which, according to their character, are beneficial or malicious, and are agreeable or terrible, insignificant or marvellous, according to our idea of impressionableness, or our condition of health or morbidity.

"After this manner may be explained telepathy, clairvoyance, the faculties attributed to the unconscious mind, dreams, and even the hallucinations and fancies of the insane. The position has seemed to me a very strong one. Whilst studying the dreams and morbid ideas of the insane, I have had a very vivid impression that a malign, diabolic, or demonic influence was concerned with them, profiting by the physical weakness of a man to instil into him all sorts of terrible, sad and absurd fancies.

"It has always seemed to me very improbable that all this is to be explained by reference to the unconscious, or to a secondary personality. And, besides,

[1] Read at the Fourth International Congress of Psychology in Paris, 1901.

all these modern psychological terms, such as an unconscious, subliminal, secondary, or tertiary personality, are they much clearer or more scientific than the terms: 'demon,' 'spirit,' or 'ghost.' In these difficult matters we are obliged largely to rely on our personal impressions and to form conceptions more or less intuitive. This does not seem very precise, but it is inevitable and, moreover, it is the same in all branches of science. Even astronomy rests on personal impressions (but verified by many), and upon intuitive conceptions of probability, confirmed by repeated observation."

In Prof. Barrett's recent book,[1] already referred to, we read the following:

"For my own part it seems not improbable that the bulk, if not the whole, of the physical manifestations witnessed in a spiritualistic séance, are the product of *human-like, but not really human*, intelligences —good or bad daimonia they may be—which aggregate round the medium, as a rule drawn from that particular plane of mental and moral development in the unseen which corresponds to the mental and moral plane of the medium, etc.

"Moreover, if there is any truth in the view suggested (above) of a possible source of the purely physical manifestations, it seems to me that the Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, points to a race of spiritual creatures, similar to those I have described, *but of a malignant type*, when he speaks of beings not made of flesh and blood inhab-

[1] *On the Threshold of a New World of Thought.*

iting the air around us, and able injuriously to affect mankind. Good as well as mischievous agencies doubtless exist in the unseen; this, of course, is equally true if the phenomena are due to those who have once lived on the earth. In any case, granting the existence of a spiritual world, it is necessary to be on our guard against the invasion of our will by a lower order of intelligence and morality. The danger lies, in my opinion, not only in the loss of spiritual stamina, but in the possible deprivation of that birthright we each are given to cherish, our individuality, our true self-hood; just as, in another way, this may be imperilled by sensuality, opium, or alcohol."

I fail to see how, in the light of evidence so forcible and gathered from such a variety of sources both ancient and modern, any sane person can prefer the charge of bigotry against a Church which, in her authoritative teaching, emphasizes these facts and utters the word of warning. Is she not, as a matter of fact, stating in theological language what some of these writers are stating in the language of science? Under the circumstances the charge might surely, with much greater fairness, be brought against the opponents of the Church, who, in their perverse blindness and ignorance, or because of their unwillingness to acknowledge the error of their ways, persist in denying these things. What one feels about the matter is, that in the face of such evidence, from even non-Catholic sources, the time is not far distant when, in view of her mission in the world, the Church will be constrained to em-

phasize these facts much more forcibly. For never, probably, in all the history of human throught, has experience and experiment borne such clear witness to a great Catholic truth, and never has science so conclusively justified the rigid attitude of the Historic Church.

If certain types of mind find it possible to attribute all these villainies and diabolical doings, of which we have such clear record in psychical research, to the spirits of their departed friends and fellow-men, and if they think that, in spite of all their manifest deceptions, they may nevertheless be trusted and drawn into the sphere of human life, they are welcome to such a conclusion. Right Christian thought, at least rightly-instructed Catholic thought, shrinks from such a view of the matter, and finds in the teaching of the Church a saner and more rational explanation. It cannot get itself to believe that the merciful God, revealed in Jesus Christ, could allow this thing to be, could permit man, even after death, to work deception and misery and ruin in the lives of his fellow-men—create in our human nature a legitimate craving, the attempted satisfaction of which, in nine cases out of ten, lures him to destruction. The doctrine of the Fall of Man, and of the Angels, and of the consequent setting free in the world of evil agencies, the existence of *unlawful* cravings in man as a result of the Fall, and his consequent contact with these evil agencies through an equally unlawful gratification of those cravings, remain for the Catholic the sanest, the most rational and the most intelligible view of the matter.

The question as to whether or not the spirits of the dead can be held to be mixed up with some of these manifestations is, strictly speaking, an academic and theological one. The best theologians,[1] for reasons most clear and valid, do not hold this view since they find it difficult to admit, on philosophical principles, that the human soul, separated from its body, can, by its natural operations, control other bodies or matter of any kind. But no final decision has been given on this point, and it would, therefore, be impossible for any man to speak dogmatically on the subject. My own argument, of course, would remain unaffected by a decision either way. It is based on the facts of experience, and experience shows conclusively that the vast majority of these intelligences are of a malign nature. This should settle the matter for all right-minded men.

We do not admit the deceiver and the liar and the demoralized blackguard to the intimacy of our family circle. We barricade our doors against him and keep our children from any kind of contact with him. Why should we act on different principles simply because the liar is an incorporeal being, but in other respects manifestly a liar. On the contrary, we should, because of the facilities of his incorporeal state of being, take more effective measures for our protection against him, seeing that he has in every way the advantage over us.

If it be urged that I have laid too much stress upon the evil aspect of the matter, and have not

[1] See the important work entitled, *The Unseen World*, by the Rev. Prof. A. M. Lépicier, O.S.M.

sufficiently considered its conceivable good—the possibility of establishing on these lines the scientific certainty of a future life, and of thus taking the bitter sting out of death, I reply that I have fully weighed the matter, from this as well as from every other conceivable point of view.

It must surely be evident from the facts presented, that certainty of a future life cannot be established on the basis of these fugitive and perplexing phenomena. They are, at best, a mere presumption in its favour, since they demonstrate that intelligence can operate in the world without physical organization. But it is impossible, as I have shown, clearly and satisfactorily to identify these intelligences. Their statements cannot be relied on. A bereaved heart, therefore, looking for consolation along these lines, cannot hope to attain the certainty which it craves. On the contrary, it is ever exposed to the most distressing disappointments and disillusionments. I have quoted instances of this kind. I know of some in which the heartless deception was maintained for years, in the course of which an extraordinary amount of intelligent information was furnished. And one must have personally known and studied some of these cases in order to appreciate the pain and bitterness of this kind of disillusionment. Scientific researchers themselves admit that impersonation is probably the greatest difficulty which lies in the way of establishing spirit-identity; in my own opinion, and I have fully weighed the pros and cons, it is an insuperable one.

2. The second fact which, I think, my lengthy examination of the subject has fully established is, that spiritistic practices and the induction of abnormal mind-states are open doors by which malign spirit-agencies invade human life.

It will be conceded, that if spirits of the air and other malign invisible beings exist, and are able injuriously to affect man, it is a first and paramount duty of man to use all such ways and means as may effectually enable him to protect himself against their invasion.

Now, it will scarcely be necessary to indicate in what these means of protection consist. Ordinary reflection would be sufficient to point them out. Any catechism of Catholic teaching will be found to contain them. The senses must be guarded, virtue must be deliberately practised and vice shunned; the thoughts of the mind must be pure and, as far as possible, directed to high and holy ends. By prayer and meditation and diligent self-examination and self-correction the soul must seek "rapport" with God and with the true spiritual order. In other words, all the God-ward qualities of our human nature must be cultivated.

But, above all things, the will must be strong and firm and on the alert.[1] It must not languidly yield

[1] "It is not possible," writes Dr. H. Maudsley, "to escape the penalties of weakening the will; sooner or later they are exacted in one way or another to the uttermost farthing; it is not possible, on the other hand, to overrate the advantages of strengthening the will by a wise exercise; the fruits of such culture are an unfailing help in time of need."—*Responsibility in Mental Disease.*

itself to passing fancies and impressions. It must energize itself, resist the first signs of a dangerous temptation, and never for a single moment be off its guard. These are admitted educational moral principles, which we inculcate in the minds of our children, irrespective of the particular religious creed which we profess.

Now, it is certain that by the practice of spiritism and mediumship, all these principles and safeguards are deliberately thrown overboard. The better phenomena cannot and do not occur, unless the mind becomes passive and the operation of the will is suspended, and the entire nature is, as it were, thrown open to the invasion of the spirit-world. The very term "medium" explains the nature of the operation. He is a passive instrument between the two states and worlds. And, since the medium does not, in his present state of incarnate life, possess any verifying faculty as to the character of the operating spirits, his passive nature resembles an open house-door at midnight, through which anyone may enter, but through which the thief and the rascal are most likely to enter. All experience proves that the passive mediumistic mind is such an open door, and I have shown at full length, in the preceding pages, in what manner the spirits make use of that door. This open door, beyond all doubt, is the chief element of danger in all psychical research, for it can be easily imagined what is likely to happen, when it is borne in mind that the operating agents are malign and evil.

I have dealt with this aspect of the subject

and will not here repeat what has already been said.

The almost criminal part of the matter is, that while our modern researches are unceasingly opening these dangerous doors, both by their teaching and experiments, they know of no means by which those doors can be shut, and they are hiding this fact from the public.

As a consequence, obsession and possession and a condition which may be termed subjective-mind-possession, are becoming everyday occurrences, and an evil is let loose upon the world, of the extent and nature of which few people have any knowledge. It is a literal passing of thousands under the power of evil spirits.[1]

That there is more scientific authority for the belief that some unusual forms of madness are in reality instances of obsession or possession than some people imagine, may be gathered from these words of so distinguished a scientist as Sir James Risdon Bennett, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., ex-president of the Royal College of Physicians, London: "There is not a little in the manifestation of many cases of lunacy that may well give rise to the question whether satanic agency has not some part therein."

"There are spiritualists to-day," writes Dr. Peebles unquestionably the most experienced spiritualist in the world, "many of whom know of the fact—the

[1] How closely exact scientific observation is approaching the view expounded and defended in my books may be seen

terribly distressing fact, that thousands nowadays are obsessed by selfish, evil-disposed spirits, as they were in the time of Anaxagoras, Socrates and Virgil's Cumean Sybil. But they deny these facts, which are as stubborn as painful. Their stock words are: 'It will hurt spiritualism.'"

These spirits do not, of course, appear with horns and hoofs, and they are not so obliging as to tell us who they are and for what purpose they really come. But they are beings of an extraordinary degree of intelligence, who have a very accurate knowledge of human nature, and of the intricacies of man's mental organism, and they can affect him, in the passive state, in a variety of ways. By the side of these superior intelligences the modern man of science is no more than a prattling infant, and all his talks of safeguards, etc., are so much meaningless nursery talk. He cannot form an approximate idea even of what their real powers and possibilities are.

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from the following statement which occurs in Prof. William James's recent report on Mrs. Piper's Hodgson-Control, which has come into my hands since the first American edition of this book was printed.

"The refusal of 'modern enlightenment' to treat 'possession' as a hypothesis to be spoken of as even possible, in spite of the massive human tradition based on concrete experience in its favour, has always seemed to me a curious example of the power of fashion in things scientific. That the demon-theory (not necessarily a devil-theory) will have its innings again is to my mind absolutely certain. One has to be 'scientific' indeed to be blind and ignorant enough to suspect no such possibility."

In a private letter, which I have recently received from one of the foremost psychical researchers in America, who is not a believer in the Christian revelation, he says:

"I feel sure that you have much right on your side—far more than present-day psychic research contends."

The extent to which these spirits can affect the mental and moral life seems to me to depend largely upon individual circumstances, upon degrees of mental and moral culture, and upon the bodily constitution. The subject himself may be wholly unaware how far he is being affected and acted upon. The external life may appear quite normal, while the inner life is being steadily undermined. This often only becomes apparent after the lapse of time, and in those sudden and often incomprehensible actions and occurrences, of which our modern life gives us so many startling examples.

In the course of my own researches, years ago, I was once told by one of these extraordinary beings that they made it their business to discover particular human passions and downward tendencies, and that "they fanned them into flame" by confusing the judgment and by presenting distorted images to the imagination. They could thus, it was maintained, exaggerate a lightly-spoken, innocent word into a grievous personal insult. Their success depended, it said, upon the degree of mental passivity which they could secure. The vices and evil passions of men, too, are thus "open doors" by which these spirits of the air gain access to the soul and the moral life. "Spirits," it declared, "get in on the current of human thought, and they direct and manipulate that current." "The evil spirits notice our inclinations," wrote Swedenborg, "and scent them like dogs scent the game," and I think it was Swedenborg, too, who said: "There are probably power and possibilities in nature which have re-

mained hidden from the eyes and knowledge of men, but which are at the service of demons by reason of their peculiar nature and intelligence."

"Obsession," writes Dr. Peebles, "in an important sense of the word, may begin with conception. A certain spirit, desiring to accomplish some purpose, may, in the very hour of conception, so infuse psychic forces, qualities, and pre-mental impressions into the germinal life—may so suggestively affect the mother as to incite and impart the life-tendency to the child. This, rather than Hindu re-incarnation, accounts for unlikeness in children, explains idiosyncrasies, and offers the key that, unlocking, tells the why and the how of the born genius."

I have some evidence that spirits really possess this power and that they apparently exercise it under certain conditions; the details of this evidence, however, are not such as admit of publication. It may be that "spontaneous" mediumship, if there be such a thing, can be accounted for along these lines.

Long observation and study of the subject have taught me, that some of the most simple and apparently harmless of spiritistic experiments are the most dangerous ones of all. They are effective means by which that mystic door, of which I have spoken, is opened. Planchette and automatic writing, for instance, so largely indulged in by solitary experimenters, may become a source of the most disastrous developments, and may lead to permanent mental and moral disturbance. I have given some cases in point in my book on *The Dangers of*

Spiritualism, and many others have come to my notice since. We can readily understand this, when we bear in mind, that a high degree of passivity is necessary before an independent spirit-message can be "got through," and that the intelligences, in these cases, operate, not by abstracting vital force in order to produce an objective manifestation, but directly through the mental organism which thus increasingly remains open to invasion.

"A vacant mind," as a popular saying has it, "is the devil's workshop." And this saying is literally true as regards subjective spiritistic practices. Hence the induction of all these states of passivity, which are known to us under the names of trance, reverie, etc., are rigidly to be condemned, and I am inclined to think that the evils attending the habitual induction of hypnosis must also be looked for in this direction. It stands to reason that if the mental organism can be thrown open and can become wholly submissive to an *incarnate* mind and will, it must necessarily become infinitely more so to a *discarnate* will, seeing that the intelligence behind that will is so much superior to that in the flesh, and is operating with infinitely greater facilities. This simple and self-evident fact does not seem to strike our modern psychic philosophers, who write so learnedly about the matter, and who are so ready to assure the public that, in the hands of experienced practitioners, hypnotism has no dangers. A moment's thought must show that these dangers must always be present, and that they may, under certain circumstances, be very grave ones.

We have surely ample illustration of the truth of this statement in the utter lack of mental balance which often characterizes the actions of people who indulge in these occult practices:—their impaired judgment, their inability to discern what may be apparent to all their friends and relatives. They will do the most grotesque and foolish things, dispose of their property in the most insane fashion, undertake journeys, or launch schemes which in the end turn out to be the very height of folly. Such people have, for the time being, lost the power of distinguishing their own thoughts and ideas from those suggested by the intelligences, which they have succeeded in introducing by "the open mental door," and which have become the dominating ideas of the mind.

In my own dealings with such persons I have always, in the first place, insisted upon a rigid abstinence from all spiritistic practices for at least six months, so that the mind may, in some measure at least, regain its balance, and that the external agency may be cut off. This often suffices to fill them with amazement at the follies which they have committed. Unfortunately, alas! these measures by themselves are not often effective in producing the desired end, and there is always the danger of a recurrence of the abnormal mental state. I know of a case in which the intelligence remained for quite two years in more or less "rapport" with the subject after the first contact.

In extreme cases, where the experiment has been carried beyond a certain point, the power of re-

sistance is completely lost, and the result is actual spirit-obsession or possession.

How real these cases are may be seen from the subjoined statement, which has been placed in my hands by a well-known man of science, who stands in the very front rank of psychical research and who, but a year ago, had some difficulty in believing in the action of an extraneous, independent spirit-agency in connection with these manifestations. His own painful experience, however, has now constrained him to change his mind on the subject. Both this gentleman and his wife, are intimately known to me, and I have been given every opportunity of studying the documentary evidence and all the details of the case. Other similar cases, in many respects identical with this one, are constantly coming to my knowledge :—

"You will, I know," writes Mr. ——, "be interested in the case I am about to lay before you. A short time ago, if anyone had told me that demoniac possession, such as is spoken of in the Scriptures, now existed, I should have laughed at him. I would do so no longer. I have gone through one of the most extraordinary and one of the most fearful calamities that it is possible for one to experience—at least not I, but my wife. Let me tell you the story.

"Some time ago she became interested in psychic investigation, and tried automatic writing for herself, with the result that, after some patient waiting, she developed into a fluent writer. A 'spirit' claimed to communicate and gave a whole life-history of himself through the automatic writing. This naturally delighted and interested us immensely. At first

all the communications came through the planchette board; but later on my wife developed writing with a pencil held in the hand; and no sooner had she done so than she began to experience a pain in the back of the brain—at the top of the spine—which increased in intensity as the days went by until it became well-nigh unbearable. Then sleep was interfered with, and her health became affected.

"It was at this stage that the communicating intelligence asserted that he had full command over my wife's body; that he had, in fact, 'obsessed' her, and that she was no longer a free agent, but subject to his will. We tried hypnotism and mental cures of various kinds, without success. We tried all sorts of physical treatment, going on the supposition that we had ordinary insanity to deal with. We tried electricity, baths, diet, fasting, massage, osteopathy, a change of air at the seashore—all to no benefit. We tried all that the doctors could do for her—likewise a failure. She was pronounced perfectly healthy, physically; no organic or even functional disturbance could be found. More and more she passed under the control and influence of the invading intelligence, and less and less concern had she in the affairs of everyday life. We now became seriously alarmed. I tried to expel the demon by will-power and by commanding him to leave; but all such efforts simply made him worse, and his hold apparently stronger.

"And now a new and a terrible feature developed. Hitherto the impulse had been to *write*—to write all the time and constantly, with a pen, a pencil, with a finger in the air—anything, so long as writing was accomplished. But now *voices* resounded in her head —two, three, four, voices—talking to one another, and freely conversing together about her. Some of these voices would praise my wife's conduct, others would blame her. Some would swear and curse and

call her vile names—names she had never heard in her normal state,—while others would try to defend her from these coarser and grosser ones. The voices told her all kinds of things. At first these things were harmless; but as time went by they told her to do things that were far from harmless—suicidal acts, in fact, which she attempted to accomplish. Once they told her to escape at all costs, and she ran out of the house and down the street in her night-gown. Twice they told her to take her own life, and this she attempted to do. She tried to shoot herself; but, fortunately, only inflicted a wound. In other ways they tried to injure her also, and only the best of care prevented a fearful accident on several occasions.

"One curious feature of the case was the fact that my wife realized all the while that these voices were urging her to her own destruction, and yet was unable to resist them. It was as if her own will was entirely in subjection to that of these infernal intelligences. She was quite rational at times, and denied that she was in any way insane; but would argue her case quite rationally, and show you just why it was obsession and not insanity —as, of course, it is universally conceived to be. She is still in this condition, in a private nursing home, as it was found impossible to keep her at home.

"You may think that this is an ordinary case of insanity, and that we have here no definite proof of 'obsession' at all; but I can assure you otherwise. There is very good proof that the phenomena are objective and not subjective in their origin. My reason for thinking so is this: During the early stages of my wife's illness, as I may call it, I went to three other well-known mediums in town, and got them to diagnose the case for me, without giving them any clue as to the real state of affairs

that existed. They could not possibly have known of her case by hearsay, as it was kept very secret. But each of these three mediums agreed that my wife was obsessed, and described in almost identical terms the kind of evil intelligence that was controlling her; and, furthermore, stated certain things that had happened at our home, which in reality had occurred. But better and more conclusive evidence was this: On one occasion the intelligence that claimed to control my wife communicated through another medium, and there asserted that he had done and said certain things at our house, which he had done and said as a fact. That is, we have here what the Psychical Research Society would call a *cross reference* between these two cases —the same intelligence apparently communicating through both mediums, and stating the same facts through both; also making the claim that he had stated those facts through my wife. Here, then, we have clear evidence of external objective reality —of an intelligence active and separate from the organism through which it is manifesting. Apart from the internal evidence afforded by the case itself, we have this additional proof that a real intelligence was at work and controlling my wife to do and say the things that she did do and say—against her own will no less than ours.

"Let me say in conclusion, that if ever it is proved, by means of such cases as this, that real external intelligences are operative in other cases of what is usually classed as ordinary 'insanity,' it will surely revolutionize medical science and the treatment of the insane. At the present time, the treatment of such cases is almost entirely physiological, and the utter inadequacy of any such treatment was never more clearly shown than in my wife's own case. No! I am persuaded that we have a real case of obsession here—one similar to many

recorded in the Scriptures, and in modern literature, both religious and secular."

In view of facts then and of occurrences such as these, so incontrovertibly and clearly established, the whole matter surely assumes a very grave aspect, and no sane man can accuse me of holding one-sided and fanatical views on the subject. These views, I maintain, are inevitable where *all the facts* are accurately known and considered. And in the light of these facts, the Church's teaching, so unpalatable to the modern mind, becomes not only eminently rational, but its truth becomes definitely established on grounds of solid experience and experiment. And the superficial knowledge and rash conclusions of very imperfectly-informed scientists become strikingly apparent.

And with this more accurate view of the matter, the truth of the original historic view of the person and mission of Jesus Christ must appeal to us with irresistible force. For, since this evil, invading human life, is an evil emanating from the sphere outside human nature, and since the remedy for that evil cannot be supposed to lie within the sphere of nature, it is reasonable to assume that it comes to us from the world which is above nature, and this establishes a strong presumption in favour of the earliest of all Christian teaching. In other words, it becomes more than probable that the Son of God indeed appeared "that He might destroy the works of the devil."[1]

[1] 1 S. John iii. 8.

And what light do not these facts throw upon the methods of the modern higher critics of the Sacred Scriptures!

It is strenuously maintained by them that the development of the Supernatural in Christianity is largely to be ascribed to the early current, but wholly unfounded, belief in demons and in demoniac invasion. This belief, they declare, had been acquired by the Jewish people through contact with neighbouring Gentile races, especially during the Babylonian captivity; and our Lord, they assert, accommodated Himself, in His teaching, to the universally accepted but groundless belief. In other words, He cast out devils where no real devils existed, and where a judicious physician or perhaps a modern mind-curer would have done equally well. Thus originated, they think, the conception of Jesus Christ, as the manifested Son of God, who had appeared to counteract and destroy the works of the devil.

With the disappearance of this belief, therefore, on the grounds of our higher culture and our supposed better knowledge of things, this latter position becomes untenable, and as a consequence, the supernatural element in Christianity vanishes away.

"During the early centuries," writes Prof. Harnack,[1] "a belief in demons and in the power they exercised throughout the world was current far and

[1] *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries.* Prof. Harnack quotes: S. Mark i. 32, 34, 39—iii. 15—vi. 13—ix. 17.

See also: S. Matt. xi. 18—xii. 22, 28—xvii. 15, etc.; St. Luke ix. 38—xi. 14.

wide. There was also a corresponding belief in demon-possession, in consequence of which insanity frequently took the form of a conviction, on the part of the patients, that they were possessed by one or more evil spirits. Though this form of insanity still occurs at the present day, cases of it are rare, owing to the fact that wide circles of people have lost all belief in the existence and activity of demons." . . . . "In order to estimate the significance of exorcism for primitive Christianity, one must remember that according to the belief of Christians the Son of God came into the world to combat satan and his kingdom."

"The evangelists, especially Luke, have depicted the life of Jesus from the Temptation onwards as an uninterrupted conflict with the devil: What He came for was to destroy the works of the devil."

It seems to me that we have here a singularly striking instance of the fallacies of the higher critical method and of the rash conclusions to which some thinkers will commit themselves. For, since still more accurate and fuller research has now shown conclusively that evil spirit-agencies most certainly do exist to-day, it seems probable that they existed in our Lord's day, and that consequently His dealings with them and His exorcisms were real and actual occurrences. And with this admission the original and primitive belief as to the supernatural Christ gains strength and support, while the airily-constructed negative system of the modern theologian falls to pieces. Indeed, we thank him

for so clearly defining for us what the belief of Christians was in the earliest centuries of the Catholic Church. The denial of the truth of that belief will have to be attempted on different lines hereafter.

That our Lord had power over the unclean spirits and that He really cast them out, seems evident from the simple form in which the narrative presents the various occurrences; and that the Church, in subsequent ages, has claimed and exercised a similar power, is evident from her history and her ritual. Justin Martyr, a learned convert to the Catholic Faith, wrote about the middle of the Second Century:[1]

"The Son of God became man in order to destroy the demons. This you can now learn from what transpires under your own eyes. For many of our Christian people have healed a large number of demoniacs throughout the whole world and also in your city, exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate; yet all other exorcists, magicians and dealers in drugs failed to heal such people. Yea, and such Christians continue still to heal them, by rendering the demons impotent and expelling them from the men whom they possessed."

We have in the present age, too, abundant evidence of the successful exercise of the Church's power in this respect, and I cannot doubt that the time is rapidly approaching when distressed souls

[1] *Apol.* ii. vi.

will increasingly turn to her for succour and relief. For the one power in the world which can effectually control these malign agencies and set their victims free is the power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour, Who appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil, and Who accomplishes this to-day through the priesthood and the sacramental institutions of the Church which He founded. All other and purely human agencies, being within the sphere of the natural, are of necessity imperfect and inadequate. They effect mere transitory and half-cures, and they cannot in any case touch the real root of the evil, *i.e.*, that condition of the soul, created by sin or occult practices, with which the external agency connects itself and upon which it operates. The divine Christ alone not only controls and banishes the evil spirit, but He fills the empty house of the soul with His own holy spirit, so that the demons, returning, find it inhabited and set in order and cannot a second time enter it and dwell there. Here, too, it is the Catholic Church alone which holds the right key to the solution of the mystery, and it is man's wisdom which is proving itself to be foolishness and which is exhibiting its folly and its helplessness.

Experience and fact, then—and with these words I must bring this lengthy chapter to a close—clearly demonstrate the falseness of the "New" Theology and of the contentions of spiritists and of scientific "reconstructionists," and go to establish the truth of the historic and primitive faith of the Catholic Church, the faith which adores Jesus

Christ as the Word-made-flesh, the Divine Sin-Bearer, the Holy One of God — the One above nature, Who appeared that he might destroy the works of the One beyond nature. Experience and fact confirm the constant and unvarying teaching of the Catholic Church that man has, by reason of the fall "*in some way passed under the power of the evil spirit.*"

I cannot refrain from concluding this chapter with the following striking passages, taken from an article on "Modern Necromancy," which appeared in the *British Quarterly Review*, in October, 1875:

"In every age and under every form of religious belief one grand rule has been accepted as the condition of supposed intercourse with the spiritual world. Whenever the subject has been approached, until within the last few years, it has been regarded as consisting of two diametrically opposed branches. Whether men have regarded the order of nature, visible or invisible, as subject to One Supreme Power, whether they have held a dualistic creed and recognized in the trials and troubles of human life, the balanced contention of the powers of good and evil; or whether they have even risen to as lofty a generalization as that of the Magian doctrine; they have never failed to hold that the light shed by the Sacred Altar was reflected by the cave of the sorcerer. We are not about to discuss the truth or wisdom of the view. We are not enquiring into the origin of the creeds. We are regarding them as they affected the human mind and thus formed the essential elements of the philosophy of history. Thus

viewed, religion and impiety, inspirations and necromancy, the word that came from God to the prophets and the word that was sought from the wizard by the familiar spirit, have always been held to exist side by side. Wherever we find the belief in supernatural powers, and in the possibility of intelligent communication between such powers and mankind, we find the belief in these two counterparts. And the more profound the belief in the Divine Revelation the more distinct has been the condemnation of the arts of the necromancer and the sorcerer." . . . "To hearken to the voice of the dead is either a delusion or a reality. If it be the former, no delusion can be more mischievous, more degrading or more revolting. If it be the latter, no pursuit can be more dangerous. It is an attempt to return to the infancy of the human race. It is a revolution against reason and an arrest of scientific and practical education. It is so opposed, in its nature, to the primary laws of human progress and human welfare, that its character must be apparent to every man of calm intelligence, even apart from the emphatic condemnation of the legislators of the race."

II

THE RESTORATION OF MAN IN JESUS CHRIST

I

The preceding argument summarized: man's estrangement from God a fact; his failure to make the right kind of connection—Need of a divine initiative—Historical Christianity this initiative—Essential elements of Revelation summarized—Accuracy of summary confirmed by careful thinkers—Two attitudes of the human mind towards Revelation—The confirmation of human experience—Mode of discerning divine truth.

I HAVE endeavoured to show, in the preceding pages, that whatever form our personal creed or philosophy may have taken, the actual facts and experiences of life most emphatically confirm the truth of the Church's teaching respecting the Fall of Man and its consequences. Or, to put it in untheological language, they go to show that some mysterious aboriginal occurrence has in some way disturbed the right relation between man and God.

It is on these grounds alone, that we can account for that strange uneasiness in the human heart which, reduced to its simplest terms, is "a sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand." It will be remembered that it is

not to a theologian, but to Prof. William James, the modern psychologist, that we owe this latter inference and definition. And no accurate student of Comparative Religion will deny that this conception is fundamental in almost all ancient and modern systems of religious thought. It is ultimately that element which keeps religion alive in the human heart, and from which all the varying doctrinal constructions proceed. It is the principle, too, which underlies the law of sacrifice and "the law of sacrifice," again, even the theosophist tells us, "underlies all systems and on it all universes are builded."[1]

It may be taken as absolutely certain, therefore, that were religion merely the expression of, or the response to, some ethical need, of which man amidst the unstable conditions of his life, has somehow grown conscious, it could not have maintained a permanent influence over the mind and the heart, and in the general "undoing of things," it would long since have passed away. We cannot account for its persistence in the midst of so many destructive conditions except by recognising the fact, that it is due to a sense or a consciousness which has its origin in a source above nature and which is fundamental and constitutional. Prof. James acknowledges this, because the varieties of religious experience demonstrate it, and in acknowledging it he demonstrates the falseness of the "New" Theology.

Speaking generally and untheologically, then, it is certain that in some way, not fully discerned by

[1] Annie Besant: *Esoteric Christianity.*

him, man has cut himself off from God; he has got out of touch with that sphere of divine operations towards which his higher nature constantly and everywhere impels him and for which it clamours, and the sense of wrongness, resulting from this state, has produced a conviction that he is only saved from the wrongness "by making proper connection with the higher powers"—in other words, by again getting into vital touch with the life of God.

This, in simple language, is what experience teaches us about the matter, and this, it seems to me, is as far as we can get in the way of definition and analysis.

We have further seen that we cannot by the term "higher powers" understand any good or any state of being that lies within the reach or the sphere of our human nature and its possibilities. In the search for happiness and for some means of setting the vaguely realized wrongness right, man has admittedly exhausted all the possibilities of his nature. He has sought the desired good and its peace in a thousand diverse ways; but the conditions of human life, as we know them to-day, are perhaps the most conclusive proof that he has failed to find it.

He has sought it in the aims and ambitions of the temporal life; in financial or social or political success and achievement. He has sought it in the engagement of the mind with the problems of science and philosophy—of human existence itself; its aim and destiny. He has sought it in pleasure

and frivolity, and in idleness; in the creation of a philosophy of life by which he hoped to forget his misery and to crush out that incessant inward craving and restlessness. He has sought it in travel, in change of scene and environment, in the diligent cultivation of the higher artistic powers and capabilities of his nature. He has sought it in the sphere of the spiritual life—in the construction of subjective religious systems, calculated to express some particular phase of the moral life and its manifestations.

He has done what unaided human nature can do in order to set the wrongness right. But the observant student is bound to admit, and indeed does admit, that all these attempts have proved and are proving failures, and that no fact in life is so well and so conclusively established as man's consciousness of his misery "as he naturally stands."

Indeed, according to the statements of men, whose position and experience entitle them to speak with authority on the subject, the entire philosophy of the modern man may be summed up in the historic phrase, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" it is a case of entire intellectual and moral bankruptcy.

It is evident then, from this palpable fact, that proper connection with the higher powers cannot be established by any effort on the human side. The attempt has been made, but it has proved a failure, and so transparent is that failure that a steadily increasing number of persons are abandoning the attempt. By the original occurrence, there-

fore, by which man has been separated from God, a gulf would certainly seem to have been fixed which man can neither span nor cross, but of the existence of which he nevertheless remains constantly and painfully conscious. And it is certainly not from theological teaching alone, but also from the facts of life and experience, that we are bound to draw this inference. And the facts themselves most certainly remain, even though we may reject and discard the theological teachings which express it.

One cause, therefore, of man's failure "to make proper connections with the higher power" lies in the manifest limitations of his nature. That nature, clearly, has in some way been spoiled and mutilated. It has been deprived of a power or faculty by which alone it can secure the knowledge which it craves, and by means of which it can participate in the life which it knows to exist and for which it is hungering.

Another cause evidently lies in the natural ignorance of man as to the precise nature of his wrongness. He has, in his heart, the sense of uneasiness, of something radically and fundamentally amiss and out of joint. And he is convinced that nothing that his ingenuity can invent will set that wrongness right. But he does not know where precisely the wrongness originated and how the persistent sense of uneasiness is to be accounted for.

The exercise of his intellect, it is true, carries him some little way towards the solution of the mystery. He looks into the hidden depths of his moral nature,

examines the promptings and suggestions which constantly arise there, and he realizes that he has to strive hard if he would bring that lower nature into some kind of uniformity with the higher, and he thus vaguely discerns in what direction the solution of the problem is to be sought. But his natural powers of reasoning do not carry him further than this; the ultimate source of the mystery escapes his apprehension, and this, in itself, constantly postulates the need of a further disclosure —in other words, a Revelation from God which will explain the existing disorder, and which will set it right.

This, surely, is a logical and consistent method of reasoning, which takes place and is bound to take place in the minds of those who are not swayed by a false philosophy, and who have not interfered with the natural working of their intellects. It is, in fact, an inference which is based on experience, and which follows from the necessary and normal processes of thought.

It seems clear, therefore, that if the gulf which separates man from God is to be bridged, if man is once more to enter into the sphere of the supernatural, which is the life of God, it is on God's side that the initiative must be taken; it is He Who must not only construct the bridge, but Who must show us how it is to be fixed on our side and on what terms and conditions we are to pass over it.

And, supposing that such an initiative be actually taken by God, that is, on the side of the world which

is the sphere of the Uncreate and the Infinite, we may reasonably conclude that there would be, in its operations, the element of mysteriousness, and of methods and ways which lie outside the powers of human discernment and apprehension. We would expect the divine operations to be supernatural and above the perception of human reason. Were it otherwise we would, of necessity, suspect in those operations a merely human cause and origin, and as such they would, in the course of time, lose their distinctive characteristics and admit of being argued away. Cardinal Newman has clearly recognized this truth and has given expression to it in the following words:

"And now," he writes,[1] "supposing it were the blessed and loving will of the Creator to interfere in this anarchical condition of things, what are we to suppose would be the methods which might be necessarily or naturally involved in His purpose of mercy? Since the world is in so abnormal a state, surely it would be no surprise to me if the interposition were of necessity equally extraordinary—or what is called miraculous."

In other words, considering all the facts of the case: the circumstance of our present helpless moral condition, and at the same time the incessant craving of our nature, our demonstrated inability to find within the realm of nature and the sphere of the known the remedy for our trouble; considering also the conscious limitation of our faculties, in their

[1] From Chap. v. of the *Apologia pro Vita suâ.*

attempt to make connection with the higher powers, the gift to man of a revelation above nature, and the disclosure of a divine remedy become not only a conceivable possibility, but a veritable necessity—indeed we cannot well imagine how such a remedy or disclosure could take any other form.

Now, it will be readily conceded by all rightly-instructed persons that Historical Christianity, as the world received it nearly twenty centuries ago, as generations of the best and noblest of men have believed it, as the Catholic Church, in her historic creed and her formulated teaching, has preserved it, not only claims to be that divine remedy and revelation, but that it has also by the universal experience of mankind proved itself to be such.

Speaking quite generally, and without in any way entering into the particulars of the case as regards historic and moral and technical evidences, this Historic Revelation, in the first place, adequately and intelligently explains the cause of man's fall and the consequent disorder of his moral nature. It confirms the truth of what the earlier revelation has to say respecting his original attitude towards God. It declares that that pride of life and of intellect, which all sane men to-day know to be the one fatal barrier between the soul and God, has in the very beginning of things, cut man off from the life of God and has separated him from that divine sphere and order, in contact with which he was originally created.

It constitutes, in the second place, a method of

restoration which man's natural faculties and modes of thought could not possibly have suggested or conceived, and against which, as a matter of fact, a certain element in his intellectual nature constantly rebels, but which, nevertheless, the experience of centuries has shown to be the only method which effectually and permanently accomplishes the end in view.

It promises, moreover, in the third place, to bestow on man, provided he be of good will, a gift or power, by the exercise of which he can qualify himself to receive and rightly appropriate the divine remedy for the healing and restoration of his soul, and by means of which he can come to understand those truths which, in a measure, must ever remain dark and mysterious to him, and which obviously cannot, in their essential characteristics, be determined within the sphere of the intellect.

It declares, in other words and briefly, that it constitutes the one true bridge which, in full view of all the infirmities of man, God Himself has constructed so that man may once more get in actual living contact with Him, and be restored to that supernatural order from which he originally fell or lapsed.

That these are the general characteristics and claims of the Christian Revelation, and that this is the sense in which the Apostles and first Christian Disciples conceived it, will not be doubted by any person who has read the New Testament, and who knows something of the history of the early Church

and of early Christian documents. Outside this conception all becomes confused and unintelligible. The very circumstance that the so-called thunderbolts of the "New" Theology are levelled against this conception is evidence that it must have formed the basis of the original and old Theology.

The notion, once advocated by some plausible writers, that this conception, however primitive, is nevertheless, the after-thought of theologians, and that Christ never made those claims or taught those truths which have caused His system to be believed a supernatural one; that it was purely ethical and simple in its beginnings, will not and indeed cannot now be entertained by accurately-instructed minds. The discoveries made in the Catacombs, the testimonies which come to us from Pagan sources, have made any such notion simply unscholarly and ridiculous, and have settled the matter once and for all. It is certain that Christ claimed to be divine, and that He also claimed and was believed to have brought to men a divine revelation. And it is certain that the early Church recognized and acknowledged the validity of this claim.

And, indeed, all really great and accurate thinkers fully admit this. It is only denied by some modern non-Catholic theologians, who make bold assertions, but do not produce a scrap of evidence in their support. They are the expression of purely individual opinions and of what a particular mind may *desire* to believe.

The form in which Catholic Theology sums up

the essential elements of the original Revelation is as follows:—

"In the mystery of the Incarnation is also contained the mystery of Redemption, for the Redeemer Jesus Christ, true Son of God, Logos (Word of God), and as such, one with God, offered Himself, according to His human nature, a sacrifice on the Cross, and by His bloody death made full and adequate satisfaction."

. . . "For God, indeed, was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing to them their sins; and He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation."—II Cor., v, 19.

In confirmation of the accuracy of this summary I will quote the statements of some cultivated laymen, who may be supposed to have given serious study to the subject, but who cannot be asserted to be speaking from the standpoint of the technical and, therefore, conceivably "prejudiced" theologian:—

"One must say a firm word respecting Christianity itself," wrote Mr. Ruskin.[1] "I find numbers, even of the most intelligent and amiable people, not knowing what the word means; because they are always asking how much is true and how much they like and never ask, first, what was the total meaning of it, whether they like it or not."

"The total meaning was and is, that the God Who made earth and its creatures, took at a certain time

[1] *Praeterita.* The Campo Santo.

upon the earth the flesh and form of man; in that flesh sustained the pain and died the creature He had made; rose again after death unto glorious human life, and when the date of the human race is ended, will return in visible human form and render to every man according to his work. Christianity is the belief in, and the love of, God thus manifested. Anything less than this, the mere acceptance of the sayings of Christ, or assertion of any less than divine power in His being, may be, for aught I know, enough for virtue, peace, and safety; but they do not make people Christians, or enable them to understand the heart of the simplest believer in the old doctrine."

"Christianity with a non-miraculous Christ," writes Mr. W. H. Mallock,[1] "is merely a form of opinion, of feeling, or of prejudice, which is no doubt honest even to the degree of fanaticism, but which is due entirely to peculiar and transitory circumstances; which has no abiding foundation in science, logic, or history; and which, though retaining at present the semblance of many Christian features, retains them only like shapes taken by a cloud, and doomed to be lost or metamorphosed in the inevitable restlessness of the air."

"If miracles do not happen and if Christ had not been with God from the beginning, what authority had He for describing to us the Father's character? And why should we order our souls in accordance with what he told us?"

[1] *Amateur Christianity.*

"Now this (Christianity as a moral system only)," says a learned physician of our days,[1] "I hold to be as pernicious as it is absurd. If Christ was only a great human teacher, what did He know more about God or morality than any other man who might have arrived at his knowledge by ordinary processes? What could He know more than you or I? He may have inferred or have guessed, but what knowledge had He?

"Again, He distinctly stated that He came from God, that He was free from sin, that He had the power to forgive sin, that no man took His life from Him, that He would rise again. He promised that whatever was asked His Father in His name He would give.

"Now, whatever may be the interpretation put upon some of these sayings, there is, I take it, no manner of doubt that He assumed supernatural knowledge and supernatural powers. He taught the highest morality of life and heart, and at the same time made these assumptions. If these assumptions were false—if He was a great impostor—what can be the value of His moral teaching; what the value of anything He said about the Father and the many mansions and the place He was going to prepare for us? Either He was true, or He was a lunatic, or He was an impostor. The last alternative seems to me impossible, for His words have appealed to the deepest recesses of the conscience of man, from the time they were uttered

[1] Sir Russell Reynolds, Bart., M.D.: *Essays and Addresses.*

until now. There was no trace of lunacy in His conduct; and although some said He had a devil, and was mad, the suggestion was at once turned aside. Then He was true; and if so, He came from God and was not mere man, and He went to God and ever lives to make intercession for us."

"I know not all the meaning of those mighty words, but I feel that there is a truth in them that passes human knowledge now, but some glimpses of the meaning of which we gather through the heart and the whole of which we may know hereafter when we know as we are known."

". . . It is not in the moral teaching of our Lord that the great power of Christianity lies, but in the belief that He did for men that which man could not do for himself—the belief that He died for you and me and in some mysterious manner made God and man at one. I have no power to theorize on this great fact, but I am sure that history teaches that it is faith in Christ, a personal Christ, Who died for us men and for our salvation, that has given the power to Christianity, and has moulded the life of the world. Would men have gone to the stake, or to the lions, or the dungeon, for a moral teaching? Would they have sung psalms in dying agonies for a moral teaching? Would crusades have been made for a mere idea? No, it has been for the belief in what He did and is doing at the right hand of God that men have been willing, nay, eager, to die."

Admitting then, that the above statements accurately define the form which Christianity took in

the minds of the Apostles and of the first disciples and believers, and that for many centuries no other form has been held by the Catholic Church to constitute true and genuine Christianity, we must either conclude that this conception is indeed a true one, or that the minds and judgments of the Apostles and earliest Christians went astray from the very beginning; that they drew and propagated wholly mistaken inferences from the words and works of Jesus Christ.

The despair of the modern rationalizing theologian has once more brought this latter argument into prominence, and has endeavoured to support it by the supposed results of a certain method of historical and philological criticism. It has been made the chief element, too, in those semi-scientific attacks on the Historic Creed, which are the expression of the peculiar tendencies of the present age. But this argument manifestly is constructed upon an utterly shallow mode of reasoning, acceptance of which not only stultifies reason, but involves rejection of the facts of history, as well as those of universal human experience. Indeed, in the light of such a contention, any conception of Christianity as in any sense a purposed and intended fact or occurrence, vanishes away, and, for the accurate thinker, the very notion of the existence and action in the world of a just and moral God disappears. For we would then have to conclude either that God, in full view of all that would result from it in the course of centuries, suffered the Christian delusion to enter the life of man and of the world; or that,

while He disclosed to man truths of the deepest importance to his moral life and to his soul, He took no pains whatever that man should clearly apprehend those truths and express them aright.

In other words, He Who gave a light to enlighten the world, allowed that light to become extinguished or to mislead the world by reason of the crooked sight of the very first persons who perceived it, and who claimed to have been enlightened by it.

And what are we to think of the value of that verifying faculty in the Christian man, the existence and action of which we must assume, and with the operation of which God must have been concerned, if the light of Christianity was in any sense intended to enlighten successive generations of men. For it must surely be clear that if a light was given at all it could not possibly have proved of any permanent service to man, unless He who gave it also took care that it did not become obscured by the weakness and faults of the human intellect, and by a fatal misapprehension in the very beginning. Accurate thought, therefore, must surely discern the untenableness of a theology which loses sight of these important considerations, and which thus creates far greater intellectual and moral difficulties than it attempts to solve. Indeed, with such a theology, carried to its legitimate conclusions, any authoritative claim of Christianity, as a law for our moral life, cannot be maintained, and to emphasize it once more, no rational man can continue to believe that God was in any wise concerned with its inception. For if He was concerned with it, we must conclude

that He has allowed the best and wisest and noblest of men to deceive themselves about the matter, and that the deepest and most stable and permanent experiences of the human soul are deceptive and cannot be trusted. The great mass of Christian mankind—and amongst them those countless numbers who have suffered the loss of all things for their faith—have then, indeed, been fatally deceived, and it is God Himself Who has deceived them—Who has allowed them, on the basis of a radical misconception, to construct their fondest hopes and their highest life.

I remember, some years ago, discussing this aspect of the matter with Prince Max of Saxony, who was then toiling in the slums of Whitechapel, and I was much interested to find that his mind had been at work on the same lines of reasoning, and that he had reached identical conclusions. With great impressiveness he pronounced these solemn words: "Sind wir Katholiken betrogen, dann sind wir bestimmt von Gott betrogen."[1] The evidences for the truth of supernatural Christianity are so clear and abundant, the records of the early development of dogma are so convincing, the testimony of the best and noblest of men as to the effect of these supernatural truths upon their lives is so complete and universal, and they have so strongly and incisively affected the entire moral and intellectual life of man, that we must either believe them to be of God, or we must forevermore abandon any

[1] Have we Catholics been deceived, it is most certainly God Who has deceived us.

attempt to discover truth and to get nearer to God. The construction of a philosophy of life without God would then become an infinitely easier matter. I need hardly say that the best theologians, both Catholic and non-Catholic, have clearly recognized this truth, and some of their statements are indeed most beautiful contributions to our literature on this great subject.

"Whereas," writes Cardinal Newman, "Revelation is a heavenly gift, He Who gave it virtually has not given it, unless He has also secured it from perversion and corruption, in all such developments as come upon it by the necessity of its nature. In other words: that intellectual action through successive generations, which is the organ of development must be in its determinations infallible."

In his Introduction to the *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, Prof. A. M. Fairbairn expresses the same thought in the following beautiful words:—

"It is not Jesus of Nazareth who has so powerfully entered into history; it is the deified Christ Who has been believed, loved and obeyed as the Saviour of the world. The act or process of apotheosis, then, created the Christian religion; and who was responsible for it? If the imaginative peasants of Galilee, they were doing a deed no less wonderful than the creation of the world, and the power or providence which allowed them to do it, was consenting by fiction and make-believe to govern reason and form character. But what kind of reflection is it upon the Maker and Master of the universe, if we conceive Him as consenting to do this thing?

Nay, in what sort of light does it set reason, if we imagine it capable of being so deluded and deceived, seduced to martyrdom or compelled to enthusiasm by a mistake? Indeed if the doctrine of the Person of Christ were explicable as the mere mythical apotheosis of Jesus of Nazareth, it would become the most insolent and fateful anomaly in history. For it could not stand alone; it would affect all thought and all objects of thought. 'Here,' men would say, 'a mere chapter of accidents has made one of the meanest figures in literature, the most potent person of all time, the source of a series of illusions which have exercised the most transcendent influence upon the life and destinies of men. If accident and illusion have played such a part in history, what character must we attribute to the power which rules the world? Order in nature is an insignificant idea compared with the idea of order in history; but how can there be an order, if the persons who create it be, in the very degree that they are potent, themselves the mere creatures of chance, or of worse than chance, fiction and pure phantasy?'"

And in concluding his deeply instructive work, Prof. Fairbairn says this:—

"Certainly no discovery has in it more promise of scientific satisfaction than the relation between the conception of Christ which makes His person the source and epitome of a religion, and the function He has actually fulfilled in history. For what is the principle fundamental to all science? This:

We do not live in a world where things come uncaused. We conceive nature as the realm where order and causation reign. Chance is a word science does not know. Accident is a term which only denotes ignorance. It is used because vision has not found the secret it searched for. The growth of science is the decay of chance; when the one has finally prevailed there will be no place for the other. But order cannot reign in the nature now around man, and yet chance govern man himself; and if order reigns in history as in nature, then the great persons, who are in history what forces are in nature, must belong to this order, for they are the very factors by which it is constituted. But if we hold this most scientific principle we must ask the inevitable question: Can Christ stand where He does uncaused, unordered? If He had not been what He was and stood where He did, could anything in history be as it has been, or as it is? Is there any person necessary in the same sense as He is to the higher history of man? May we not speak of Him as the keystone of the arch which spans the gulf of time? But can we conceive that the keystone came there by accident? or otherwise than by the hand which built the bridge, which opened the chasm, and determined the course of the river that flows beneath? And can the nature or character of this cause be known? Causes are known in their effects, for cause and effect ever correspond in quality and character. This Christ, then, as He stands in universal history, accomplishing those marvels of the Spirit which we have seen indis-

solubly associated with His person and His name, is an effect; and as He is, the Cause of Him must be. Nay, more, is not the effect only as it were the Cause embodied, the old force, unspent, persisting in a new form? And how shall we express the idea in this case better than in the evangelical formula, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us?' And how better describe His continuous action through all the centuries of our Christian experience than by the verse: 'We beheld His glory, a glory as of the only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth?' The grandeur which thus comes to His person transfigures through it all nature and the whole history of man, and may well bid us adopt as our own the words which sum up the faith of an apostle, 'God has been in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.'"

The following striking statement, attributed to Napoleon at St. Helena, is quoted by Mr. W. S Lilly in *Many Mansions*. It will be seen to contain weighty and significant thoughts to whatever mind we may attribute it:—

"The conception of Christ as a mere Jewish peasant, endowed with fine spiritual instincts, fired by high enthusiasms and labouring unsuccessfully as a religious, ethical and political reformer of his country is, to my judgment, wholly inadequate to the facts of human life and of that record of human life which we call history.

"Consider what Christ has been for nineteen hundred years to the foremost people of the world, and to their noblest men and women. Is it possible

to believe that the martyrs who counted it all joy to die for Him, the virgins, His mystical spouses, who discerned in Him 'the fairest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely,' and found their life in losing it for Him; the confessors, the doctors, the ascetics, to whom His very name was as a sweet song in the ear, as wondrous honey in the mouth, as heavenly nectar in the heart—in aure dulce canticum; in ore mel mirificum; in corde nectar cœlicum—is it possible to believe that all the generations of these holy souls were walking in a vain shadow, were given over to a strong delusion to believe a lie?

"Nay, though nineteen hundred years have passed away since He was uplifted on the Cross, still His name has Its hold on the human mind. . . . . Amid the most vicious nations, under the most diversified circumstances, in the most cultivated, in the rudest races and intellects, the Owner of that great Name reigns. High and low, rich and poor, acknowledge Him, are venturing at His word—are looking for his presence. Palaces, sumptuous, innumerable, are raised to His honour. His image, in its deepest humiliation, is triumphantly displayed in the proud cities, at the corners of the street, on the tops of mountains; . . . . it is worn next the heart in life; it is held before the failing eyes in death. Here, then, is One Who is not a mere name: He is not a mere fiction. He is a substance. He is dead and gone, but still He lives as the living energetic power of a thousand generations. Can He be less than divine?"

I would invite the thoughtful and unprejudiced reader to compare these statements with the pantheistic assertions and shallow reasonings of the "New" Theology, and to ask himself what his own judgment and his inward experience have to say about the matter. In the light of these incontrovertible facts and truths does not the modern rationalistic Christianity, with its purely ethical Christ, stand self-condemned? Can it be termed Christianity in any intelligible sense at all? Is it not ordinary common-sense and accurate thinking which condemn it, and must they not always condemn it before we even approach the sphere of technical and professional theology?

In any case, if the other position be the true and correct one, if throughout the centuries, men and women, and that the best and noblest of them, have laboured under a delusion, if, strictly speaking, there is no Supernatural, let us give up the idea of Christianity as being in any sense a revelation altogether, let us honestly admit that Christ and we have been and are mistaken—let us not attempt grotesque and eternally impossible compromises which only tend to do violence to our reason. A revelation, leaving everything to be revealed according to particular judgments and modes of philosophy, changing with the ever-changing Zeitgeist and admitting of a hundred mutually contradictory views and aspects, is no revelation at all in any definite and intelligible sense. A church, not knowing whether it has or has not divine authority, and allowing a diversity of opinions on matters

vitally affecting the soul's life, is not a church which can have any permanent claim upon the allegiance of reasonable men. Of such a church or theology we would have to say with Bossuet: "Thou changest; therefore thou art error."

These principles are forcibly expressed in a paragraph which came under my notice some time ago, but the original source of which I cannot now trace. Its logical sound reasoning can scarcely fail to command the attention of thinking minds, and it seems to me that for such minds there is no honourable escape from that logic:—

"Out of all the diversities and controversies concerning religion in our time, an issue is slowly emerging which will make all other questions seem unimportant. Is any religion given by divine revelation and supernatural authority? If so, which religion has been so given, what are its credentials, and what is its authority? When it comes to the final test, there is no escape from the most extreme position of the Catholic Church, or a total rejection of it. Revealed religion is infallible, if God knows the truth and knows how to tell it. A religion given by supernatural authority is not to be neglected or resisted. It has the right to command the allegiance of every human being. Outside of this religion there is no truth that can be set over against it, and beyond its jurisdiction no human being has a right to live, or, living, to choose his own course of action. Under the claim of supernatural authority there can be no room for doubt, there can be no liberalism and

no liberty. There never has been a time in the history of the world when this question could clear itself of all the accidents of tradition and belief; but the time is at hand when the churches and the theologians must decide whether religious truth is to be sought as all other truth is, and its authority be that which all truth possesses, or whether it is to be received as a gift, to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be subtracted."

I would, therefore, again urge what I urged in the opening paragraphs of this book: that it is not by the examination of technical theological problems, or by an intricate study of modern speculative theories or systems, but by a return to simplicity of thought and reflection, by the application of ordinary common-sense, and by a loyalty to the elementary laws of human reasoning and experience, in other words, by a becoming true to ourselves, that we are likely to get back to truth and to the right solution of the greatest of all problems. We may be quite sure that if truths, essential to the moral well-being and the future happiness of man, in all conditions of life, have been disclosed, the discernment of those truths could not have been made dependant upon intricate and complex investigations, and upon purely intellectual ascertainments and conclusions. Such methods of ascertaining and verifying truth would be impossible for the vast majority of mankind and, as a consequence, the desired and necessary truth would be for ever escaping them. Under the most favourable circumstances doubt and misgiving would remain in the mind, and

upon doubt and vagueness no sensible man can construct a consistent spiritual life, involving self-abnegation and often serious sacrifice in the temporal order. Unfortunately we concern ourselves far too much with the thoughts and writings of others and far too little with those operations in our own minds and hearts which, if they correspond with the truths proposed, may reasonably be supposed to be a guide for us, if God is, and if there is a truth which He has disclosed.

With the facts and experiences of nearly two thousand years before us, no man, possessed of a properly balanced mind, should be disturbed by any kind of "New" Theology, or should have great difficulty in discerning how and where the true Theology is to be found. The theological thunderbolts, which enterprising "new" divines let off from time to time, and which are often so plausibly framed that they have all the appearance of special revelations, are often not worth the paper on which they are printed. Their force consists, for the most part, in their exceeding impudence and their boldness of statement, and in their appeal to that attraction which the novel and original, even in religion, has for the modern mind. In most instances these thunderbolts are but very ancient and well-known heresies, dressed up in modern form, which the Catholic Church has repeatedly refuted, but which have a tendency to reappear as the centuries pass, and as the darkened human intellect reaches some particular phase or terminus in its revolutions.

It will be seen, on reflection, that assuming that a supernatural Revelation has been given, there are and must always have been two widely varying attitudes which the human mind would take up respecting it.

The first is that of humble and reverent acceptance and submission. It is conditioned by self-knowledge and by a constant vivid realization of the limitations of human reason (especially in the sphere of the soul's highest concerns); of the real misery and wretchedness of human life, and of the insolubility of its problems except by an authoritative external disclosure—by the attuning and raising up of the soul to the apprehension of its mysteries, and by loyalty to any inward promptings which may go to confirm the truth of the external revelation proposed. It is the attitude of the learner and the disciple.

The other attitude of mind is that of arrogant and self-confident criticism. It is chiefly due to pride of intellect, which refuses to recognize its limitations, and which declines to submit itself to any truth, however coercive in its claims and evidences, which it cannot wholly fathom and discern by its own operations. It is the attitude of the judge and the critic, who, unable to ignore and dispose of the truth presented, is ever bent upon distorting and mutilating it, and of bringing it down to the level of his understanding and of what he calls the dictates of his reason. It is the attitude of the man whom we may compare to a fly, crawling about the dome of St. Paul's and undertaking to

explain how the entire complex structure and the world in which it stands have come into existence.

It will be seen on reflection that the world's theologians and theologies may always be fitted into either one or the other of these two attitudes of thought, and they will surely continue to exist while the world lasts. We may thus confidently assume that a future age will present the world with a still "newer" theology and with a still "truer" and more up-to-date Catechism. And on these grounds alone we may safely disregard the claims of the present "New" Theology.

It becomes a question, clearly, then, of human experience. If God, by an external voice, has really spoken to the world, it is inconceivable that He should not have confirmed the truth of His message by an internal witness, seeing that His message claims to emanate from the spiritual order and that man's faculties are darkened by the Fall and limited by the conditions of the natural order. The blind and helpless sheep can only be expected to obey and to follow the call of the Shepherd, if they clearly recognize His Voice and if they have the full inward conviction that obedience to His call will lead them to happiness and security. They are only too well aware that there are false shepherds and even wolves prowling about, and that the sound of their voice is sometimes remarkably like that of the true Shepherd.

But, before we approach the question of experience and of the interior operations which take place

in the Christian soul, what, we may ask, was the method by which the truth as to the nature and mission of the Redeemer was disclosed to the human mind in the first instance?

The answer to this question is contained in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew.

Christ had sent out the twelve to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, to cast out unclean spirits, and to heal the sick and, on their return to Him at Cesarea Philippi, He asked them: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" They replied: "Some John the Baptist, others some Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Christ then enquired: "But Whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Upon this Christ made the following momentous and significant statement: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, Who is in Heaven. And I say unto Thee," etc., etc.

This surely is clear and emphatic and should leave no doubt or misapprehension in any mind. St. Peter did not discern the truth respecting the nature of Christ's person and mission by any natural operation of his intellect or by the evidence of his senses, but by revelation of God; by an awakening of that faculty of his nature which put him "in rapport" with the supernatural order. In theological language: St. Peter saw the higher truth by the action of divine grace. And from St. Peter onwards, from the beginning of Christianity, through the long

centuries of the Church, right down to our present day, the Christian soul has claimed to accept this truth by the same operation and has, on the grounds of that operation, constructed its highest life. That mystic operation indeed is the keynote in the life of the saint, and of the martyr and doctor of the Church, and of those countless thousands of men and women, in every age, who, because of this operation and its convincing force, have left all and have followed Him. And the supernatural truth thus disclosed has formed the substance of all the Church's Creeds and statements of belief, and without it the entire New Testament record, the history of the Church, and the writings of her theologians and doctors become wholly unintelligible.

And whoever, throughout these ages, has denied this truth, or who has made any attempt to square it with the limitations of human reason has been pronounced by the Church an infidel and heretic.

Now, the reasonableness of this method of discerning supernatural truth must become apparent upon even superficial reflection. Experience has demonstrated the limitations of human faculty, the inability of the natural man to fathom and apprehend the world and the things above nature. And yet that same experience constantly and everywhere recognizes the existence of that supernatural, and clamours for knowledge of and contact with it. Assuming, therefore, that by the act of God the supernatural comes to disclose itself, it becomes evident that its recognition and acceptance cannot be due to any power or faculty in nature. He Who

discloses it must also with it impart the power by which its truth can be perceived. If it were otherwise, the apprehension of the highest truth would be dependant upon intellectual achievement, and the educated man and the scientist would have the most perfect knowledge of it.

"From the very nature of the case it is evident," says a modern writer, "that the supernatural can never be a matter of science and of knowledge, for the moment it is brought within the cognizance of reason, it ceases to be supernatural."

Its verities, moreover, would thus become subject to the changing fancies of the intellect, and to the natural tendency of fallen human nature to pervert and modify truth. These verities would not merely cease to be supernatural, but they would be devoid of anything approaching authority and certainty. Correct reasoning, therefore, recognizes the wisdom of God, not only in the divine disclosure itself, but in the supernatural method by which it is perceived, and by which it is made accessible to the simplest and humblest and most unlearned of mankind. Indeed, we can see at once how worldly knowledge and learning may, if wrongly directed and estimated, become a fatal barrier to its perception. We can, on these principles, account for the origin of all the various unhistoric, and "natural" conceptions of Christianity. "It is only too true," said Leibniz, "that the learned are not always enlightened with the true light." And I think it was Cardinal Newman who said: "It is the energy of thought which keeps thee from thy God."

"For human pride, of course, is forever revolting against this Revelation. The unrestrained intellect is forever beating its wings against this wall of brass that marks its limitation. It would so like to go out and wander at its own sweet will across the deserts of the universe and build up its own idols, as the Israelites, under God's very eye, built their simulacra of gold and silver and said they were their gods. Human folly is never at an end. It only takes different modes and shapes. When one thinks of the orgies of the French Revolution, and the apotheosis of reason under the vilest form conceivable, it seems not too far-fetched to predict that modern civilization may yet revert to the gods of Greece and Rome."[1]

We would do well to weigh the striking words of St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians:[2] "The sensual man," he sums up his argument there, "the man who is either taken up with sensual pleasures, with carnal and worldly affections, or who measures divine mysteries by natural reason, sense, and human wisdom only, perceiveth not these things that are of the spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand because it is spiritually examined."

Nor could it have become discernible by means of books or manuscripts or documents. These could, at best, but state the nature of the divine message and the conditions on which its truth can be discerned. They could not impart the truth itself or

[1] Rev. P. A. Sheehan, D.D.. *Under the Cedars and the Stars.*
[2] 1 Corinth. ii. 4-16.

bring to the heart conviction and certainty. They, too, moreover, would, without some higher controlling knowledge, become subject to human error and misinterpretation. A thing of the spirit can only become evident by the operation of the spirit. A truth above nature can only disclose itself by the testimony of a witness above nature. Life may flow through living men and through a living organism; but it cannot flow through a book or through any written record. These can witness to its existence, but they cannot convey or impart it.

"Christ alone," wrote Fr. Hecker,[1] "can make men Christians, and no account of Christ is Christ. The contents of a book, whatever these may be, are powerless to place its reader into direct and vital relation with its author. No man is so visionary as to imagine that the mental operation of reading the *Iliad*, or the *Phaedo*, or the *Divine Comedy*, suffices to put him in communication with the personality of Homer, or Plato, or Dante. All effort is in vain to slake the thirst of a soul famishing for the Fountain of living waters from a brook, or to stop the cravings of a soul for the living Saviour with a printed book. . . . His words are: 'Come unto Me all that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will refresh you.' It was the attempt to make men Christians by reading the Bible that broke Christendom into fragments, multiplied jarring Christian sects, produced swarms of doubters, filled the world with sceptics and scoffers at all religion, frustrated combined Christian action and put back the Christian con-

[1] *Life of Fr. Hecker.*

quest of the world for centuries. Three centuries of experience have made it evident enough, that if Christianity is to be maintained as a principle of life among men, it must be on another footing than the suicidal hypothesis invented in the sixteenth century after the birth of its divine Founder."

It is not by intellectual conclusion then, but by spiritual illumination that the revealed truths of the supernatural order reach and have ever reached the human mind and the heart. It is by faith in God the Revealer, and by the grace of the Enlightener, that we discern the mystery of Redemption and that we enter upon life on the supernatural plane. And it is by actual soul-contact with that plane that certainty enters the mind and that doubt and misgiving vanish away. And this certainty, emanating from God Himself, is greater and deeper by far than any other kind of certainty reached by the mind in the natural order. It is apt to endure when everything else in life breaks down and gives way. It is the anchor of the soul in its darkest and gloomiest hour. This is the divine and God-ward aspect of the matter.

On the human side the conditions are self-knowledge and humility, a willingness to receive what God may be disposed to reveal, and to receive it with faith and in the spirit of obedience: to train the spiritual eye and the ear, that they may become capable of discerning the sights and sounds of the supernatural plane; by prayer and holy living and thinking to cultivate that soul-receptivity upon which the Divine Spirit can act and by means of

which the soul is moved in the God-ward direction. These conditions have been recognized by the greatest minds to be the conditions on which spiritual truth is discovered, and they will be seen to be in keeping with the constitution of our human nature and to be altogether reasonable.

For "the credentials of Christianity are sufficient for men of good will. To such alone is its peace offered. Aristotle truly teaches that, in the moral order, truth is apprehended not only by the intelligence, but by the whole soul. As a matter of fact, there is only one way in which Christianity ever has made, or ever will make, proselytes in the world. Its victories have been won not by argument—arguments have been called the symbols of something deeper—not by mere eloquence, not by the wisdom of this world, but by an appeal to those fundamental spiritual instincts of men, whereunto it supremely corresponds."

A mystic writer expresses the same thought as follows:

"If beyond the natural life of man's soul there is a supernatural undreamt-of life, end, and happiness, there must also be a supernatural light over and above the natural light of reason. And as he who holds not to the natural light of reason, cannot possibly live the proper life of man, but becomes as the brutes that perish, so he who holds not by faith to the supernatural light of Revelation, without doubt will walk in darkness and miss the supernatural life of grace and glory."

I find the following notes on the subject, collected

from divers sources, amongst my papers. The trained theologian may pronounce some of them inadequate and imperfect; they aim, nevertheless, in various ways, it will be admitted, at expressing the truth which is here under consideration:

"The Christian tradition is what the Abbé L. Laberthonnière calls the truth of Christ—*i.e.*, the redemptive power of God operating in Jesus of Nazareth and in humanity organizing itself in His Spirit, in the Church of Christ. This truth is not now, and never has been in the past, capable of being recognized or established by facts of history, though, of course, like every concrete truth, it was given in facts of history. The truth of Jesus Christ was certainly given in phenomena. His life was a real life, a life happening in the world of phenomena and a part of that world. But His truth could not be phenomenally perceived. It was and remains the supreme affirmation of reality by living men, who find in it the answer to their own highest needs, the means and the guarantee of reality in themselves. The truth of Christ is an affirmation of that natural faith which is the necessary expression of man's spirit in the fulness of its activity. The phenomenal events through which it was revealed, lie entirely within the purview of historical criticism."[1]

"The natural man may talk learnedly about the supernatural, but until he actually lives and moves in the supernatural he can have no real and accurate knowledge of it. Just as a fish cannot even conceive of the life of a bird, so the 'natural' man

[1] *Essais de Philosophie Religieuse.*

cannot know the things of the spirit. The statements of unspiritual men therefore on this subject are of necessity wholly worthless. Such men cannot tell us anything of a sphere of life and of activities, for the appreciation of which they lack certain gifts or faculties, and of the very laws of which they are ignorant."

"There are those to whom the belief in Christ's Godhead is based solely upon the fact of experience that, among the great men who have taught and inspired us, He stands alone in having saved us."

"It is one thing to believe and to confess a doctrine and it is quite another thing to be in actual touch and in living communion with the divine reality which that doctrine presupposes and postulates. That the early Christians and martyrs knew something of this divine reality, on the strength of which the doctrine came to be formulated, may, I presume, be taken for granted; and it is monstrous to suppose that the noblest and most heroic of Christians misunderstood the matter, while the modern philosopher and speculative theologian has the true and accurate conception of it. There is surely very good reason for concluding, that the truth respecting the nature of Christ's person and the source of His doctrine was with those who ventured life and limb in order to secure Christian Baptism or to partake of the Divine Food off a Christian altar."

"We cannot become conscious of anything or of any truth outside the plane of our own conscious-

ness. It is by elevating and purifying our own consciousness that we reach conditions where higher perceptions become possible. 'If any man will do His will, he shall know, etc.' 'Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.' 'The sensual man discerneth not the things of the Spirit.' 'To be carnally minded is death.' This is the great law of the spiritual life and of the supernatural order. Intellect and culture in themselves cannot reach it; they may even bar the way by creating obstacles. The sphere of the Divine cannot mingle with and touch the sphere of the human, unless there be the highest possible approach on the human side and the ground be prepared for effective spiritual co-operation. And that approach is by purity of mind and of life, patient, submissive prayer and a constant familiar intercourse with unseen realities. Hence the spiritual blindness of purely intellectual men; the utter blindness of wholly carnal men. And yet consider the justice and wisdom of the divine law. For by its operations the highest truth is open to all—to rich and poor, to learned and under-learned; and for the proud and self-sufficient alone is the door closed."

"So reverent is God to that Spirit which is Himself in man, that He will not even pour into the human soul a flood of strength and life unless the soul is willing to receive it. There must be an opening from below as well as an outpouring from above, the receptiveness of the lower nature as well as the willingness of the higher to give."[1]

[1] *Esoteric Christianity.*

"No amount of evidence drawn from the world of nature can demonstrate the existence of a world above nature. The supernatural is not to be demonstrated, it is to be felt; it does not prove itself to sense, it reveals itself to faith. . . . The answer, and the only answer each can make to the other is this: Stand where I do, feel as I feel, and you will see what I see and hear what I hear."[1]

"What was it that, so to speak, made the Christian Church? It was assuredly no system or theory, most assuredly no exhibition of thaumaturgic power which attracted men to Jesus Christ, but the irresistible influence of soul upon soul. To those who forsook all and followed Him, He exhibited no set of doctrines, no code of laws, but Himself, as being, in very deed, the truth which is the soul's supreme desire."[2]

"The early Christians, without Bible and external evidence beyond the teaching of the Church, knew, in some way they could not define, that God had spoken by His Son. Dogma, that is the scientific fixing of truth, so far as this is possible, came later, and the Creeds were not only expressions of truth, but means of guarding that truth against error and against the disintegrating influence of human reason and of half truths."

"The spiritual illumination vouchsafed to the pure and humble of heart gives a safer guidance than all

[1] From the writings of the late Protestant Archbishop Magee.
[2] W. S. Lilly.

the learning of critics and all the speculations of philosophers."[1]

"It is . . . important to remember that the logical is not the final court of appeal, if we are to carry out this symbol in the matter of evidence. Beyond the court of logic—where thought is made clear, precise and self-centred—there is the court of intuition where the ultimates of belief are borne witness to by evidence that is direct and final."[2]

St. Ignatius, who was the divine instrument in establishing and perfecting God's authority in the external order, yet left on record,[3] that so clearly had the Holy Spirit shown him, by secret teaching, the truths of religion that, if all the Scriptures had been destroyed, his private revelations at Manresa would have sufficed him in their stead.

Mr. Gladstone helped to remind us that modern science was absurdly exaggerating its range when it claimed to dispose off-hand of the spiritual experience of ages. "Unbroken sequences in the physical order," he writes to Lord Acton, "do not trouble me, because we have not to do with the natural, but with the moral order, and over this science, or as I call it natural science, does not wave her sceptre."

"It is still good to remind people that unchristian theism, even pantheism, are dogmas as much as

[1] From a recent criticism of Von Hügel's *The Mystic Element of Religion*, by Rev. W. H. Kent, O.S.C.
[2] Prof. W. Knight: *Aspects of Theism.*
[3] He confessed this one day to Fr. Laquez.

Christianity; that if you upset the testimony of the first Christians to Christ's divinity, you cut out the heart even of the ethical teaching; that there is a fairly long history behind the orthodox interpretations; *and that we cannot in modesty suppose that the tendencies of thought in our own generation necessarily outweigh the experience of all the centuries.*[1]

And finally it is significant and instructive to find that even higher critics and "new" theologians are, in their better moments, constrained to bear witness to this truth. In *Christianity and History* Prof. Harnack writes:

"Besides the four Gospels we have a fifth, and in many respects its voice is clearer than those of the four. I mean the united testimony of the first Christian community. It enables us to gather what was the prevailing impression made by this Personality and in what sense His disciples understood His words and the testimony which He gave of Himself. . . . "Great is the power of external authority, great is the power of signs and wonders, but only where their substance lies can faith and devotion find their ultimate assurance. Their substance is God the Lord; it is reliance on Jesus Christ, Whose word and spirit are even to-day a witness to the heart of the power of God.

"Woe to us if it were otherwise; if our faith rested on a number of details, to be demonstrated and established by the historian. It would be mere

[1] From an article on *Gladstone's Place in Religious Thought.*

sophistry for any historian to claim that he had achieved any such task, for it is assuredly true that no detail of the past can attain such a degree of evidential certainty that it could form the foundation for bricks and mortar, let alone for a whole eternity. Testimonies, documents, assertions, when all is said, to what do they amount?"

It will be seen from some of these notes and statements what really great and accurate thinkers have to say about the matter and how effectively they demonstrate the truth of Historical Christianity and the baseless assumptions and fundamental errors of the "New" Theology. It is surely too late in the day to attempt to revive the ancient heresies which that theology conceals, or to hope that it will establish itself on a permanent foundation. Against its shallow pretensions stand the facts of history and the experience of two thousand years. These cannot be overthrown even by the most plausible of reasonings, and least of all by what physical science may disclose. In God's infinite wisdom, man's highest good has been withdrawn from the very sphere of the scientist and the philosopher. They cannot reach that good except by walking the path which the washerwoman and the crossing-sweeper must walk: the path of humility and self-abasement, of earnest prayer and soul-culture, of persistent supplication for the divine gifts of grace and spiritual discernment. It is the path along which honours and worldly distinctions, it is true, are not to be found, where intellectual achievements count for very little, and where contempt and humiliation often await

the weary and world-sick wanderer. It is the path which has little attraction and no doubt proves a very thorny one for many a "new" theologian and philosopher.

That accurate and profound learning is calculated to hinder men from walking this humble path is, of course, wholly untrue and is another baseless assumption. The records of the lives and thoughts of some of the greatest and most learned of men disprove it. The entire history of the Catholic Church utterly refutes it. It is inaccurate knowledge which rashly jumps to conclusions, or pride which fails to recognize the limitations of the human mind, that are the dangerous things. It is the superficial thinker who is forever talking of the conflict between science and religion and who invents new and "reconciling" theologies.

No modern scholar in the ranks of the Catholic laity has probably achieved greater distinction than the late Lord Acton. "No foreigner," we read in the *Edinburgh Review*,[1] "had followed with greater perseverance the researches and results of the Protestant Theology and critique in Germany, nor given its study more careful attention. Yet it was in 1864, in conversation with Sir Mount Stuart Grant Duff, a refined and highly cultured eclectic, who is capable of appreciating in Catholicism its aspect of mystical devotion, that Lord Acton made the following statement:

"I am not conscious that I ever in my life held

[1] April, 1903.

the slightest shadow of a doubt about any dogma of the Catholic Church."

"That statement," continues Sir Mount Stuart Grant Duff, "coming from a man who had read everything worth reading, in the remotest way bearing upon the controversies between his own and other forms of faith, who was a profound theologian as well as a profound historian and philosopher, was the most remarkable ever made to me by a human being. Of its absolute sincerity, however, I am as certain as I could be of anything. His mind worked in a way totally incomprehensible to me." . . . . "Communion with Rome," he said, "is dearer to me than life itself."

The late M. Brunetière wrote in one of his last letters:

"In matters of dogma or morals I am only bound to verify and to prove the authority of the Church. Revelation has not had for object to put the human intellect in possession of the unknowable; and if there were no mysteries in religion I should not need to believe; I should know. Let us avoid here one of the worst confusions of modern criticism. The object of faith, and that of knowledge, are very distinct. I do not *believe* that two and two make four, nor that like begets like, nor that Cæsar conquered at Pharsalia; all this I *know*. If I knew in the same way and with the same evidence, if I could understand with the same clearness the mystery of the Incarnation or the operation of grace, these would be no longer mysteries, and the know-

ledge would be no longer creed or faith: 'Fides est argumentum rerum non apparentium.' This does not mean that faith is contrary to reason. No, it is not contrary; it only introduces us into a region more than human, where reason, being human, has no access. It gives us lights which are not the results of reason; it continues it, it perfects it, and, if I dare to say so, it crowns it."

The only question then which would seem to call for examination, is the question as to the degree of reliability which attaches to these inward perceptions and soul experiences. Are they conclusive and authoritative for us, when they seem to witness to the truth of the external and but partially discernible disclosure—in other words, can a true Christian really trust the testimony of his soul? I cannot conceive how any person, who believes in a personal and moral God, can give any but an affirmative answer to this question. Is it conceivable even that God would, in so fatal and twofold a manner, make it possible for the best and wisest of men to deceive themselves and allow mankind to go hopelessly astray in the matter of its highest concern and at a most critical period in its history? What possibility would there remain to us of becoming certain of any truth in the moral order, and on what grounds could reasonable men be expected to yield obedience to it in mind and in action? The very thought seems to me to be closely akin to blasphemy, and right reason itself must emphatically condemn it.

II

Modern psychology and religious experience—The "New" Theology and the facts of experience—The human mind and the Infinite.

But I propose to look at the matter from a purely human point of view and to quote an authority which cannot be suspected of being even remotely concerned in defending the supernatural truths of Christianity. Prof. William James has studied the subject from the standpoint of the modern psychologist; he has sounded the ultimate depths and basis of the relgious life, and the conclusions to which he has come are certainly remarkably interesting and suggestive. Of him surely it may with confidence be said: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." And we may well hope that he will some day see his way to that further and higher knowledge which is to be found along that well-known but difficult and thorny path of which I have spoken.

The following quotations are from Prof. James's magnificent lectures on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, which were delivered in Edinburgh in 1901 and 1902 and to which I have already referred:

"If religion be a function by which either God's cause or man's cause is to be really advanced, then he who lives the life of it, however narrowly, is a better servant than he who merely knows about it, however much. Knowledge about life is one thing; effective occupation of a place in life, with its

dynamic currents passing through your being, is another."

"The spiritual life (quoting a correspondent) justifies itself to those who live it; but what can we say to those who do not understand? This at least we can say: that it is a life whose experiences are proved real to their possessor, because they remain with him when brought closest into contact with the objective realities of life. Dreams cannot stand this test, etc."

"It is a commonplace of metaphysics, that God's knowledge cannot be discursive, but must be intuitive; that is, must be constructed more after the pattern of what in ourselves is called immediate feeling, than after that of proposition and judgment."

"Mystical states are states of insight into depths of truth, unplumbed by the discursive intellect."

"It must always remain an open question, whether mystical states may not possibly be such superior points of view, windows through which the mind looks upon a more extensive and inclusive world."

"Mystical states break down the authority of the non-mystical or rationalistic consciousness, based upon the understanding and the senses alone. They open out the possibility of other orders of truth in which, so far as anything in us vitally responds to them, we may freely have faith."

"The existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretension of non-mystical states to be

the sole and ultimate dictator of what we may believe."

"There are moments of sentimental and mystical experience . . . that carry an enormous sense of inner authority and illumination with them when they come. But they come seldom and they do not come to everyone, and the rest of life makes either no connection with them, or tends to contradict them more than it confirms them."

An attempt is often made by a certain class of very "practical" persons to identify deep religious experience with morbid conditions of body or of mind, so much so that some of our modern wiseacres have come to take it for granted that when these experiences occur in the constitutionally feeble or afflicted they must be considered to be of no particular evidential value. Accurate thinking might reasonably suppose the opposite to be the case, since observation and a knowledge of human nature certainly teach that the "natural," the sense-man, does not easily discern the things of the spirit. It is not generally the robust, physical constitution in which spiritual forces most readily operate. Notions such as these, however, set in circulation perhaps by some accepted neurological authority, are apt to be echoed by the multitude and, in the course of time, they come to be regarded as actual truths. It is interesting to observe, therefore, that a really well-informed psychologist, who has devoted many years of study to the subject, takes a very different view of the matter, and indeed finds the

very opposite to be the case. He comes to the conclusion that weakness of constitution and certain nerve-states may be the very conditions of the highest spiritual receptivity, and open doors, as it were, through which true spiritual forces most readily enter in and take possession. The fulness of the mental or physical life, on the other hand, may be a screen by which those forces are most effectually shut out from the soul. It is unnecessary to point out that this has been the teaching of the Catholic Church in all ages, and that it is a principle which is recognized and emphasized in her system of Mystical Theology. Most ancient and modern occult systems too lay down this principle as a fundamental one, and, of course, all experience amply confirms it. But it is certainly deeply instructive to find, that perhaps the foremost of modern psychologists is constrained to admit that the Church's view of the matter is the right one.

"What right have we," writes Prof. James,[1] "to believe nature under any obligation to do her work by means of complete minds only. She may find an incomplete mind a more suitable instrument for a particular purpose. It is the work that is done and the quality of the worker by which it was done, that is alone of moment; and it may be no great matter from a cosmical standpoint if in other qualities of character he was singularly defective, etc."

"If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite receptivity."[1]

"In the psychopathic temperament we have the emotionality which is the *sine quâ non* of moral perception; we have the intensity and tendency to emphasis which are the essence of practical moral vigour, and we have the love of metaphysics and mysticism which carry one's interests beyond the surface of the sensible world."[2]

"Let us not cut ourselves off from sustaining power of (the subconscious). If we have instinct for worship, for prayer, for communion with saints or with Deity, let us trust that instinct, for there lies the true realm of religion."[3]

Commenting upon these striking statements, a writer, in criticizing them, justly remarks:

"Here is a thoroughly scientific psychologist, a man in the first rank of world-wide reputation, who declares it to be a real and objective truth, that in God we live and move and have our being."

We have thus seen what history, reason, experience and some of the real thinkers of the world have to say on this great subject and how thoroughly their conclusions, logically considered, go to establish the truth of orthodox historical Christianity. And taken collectively they do not as a matter of fact leave a single loophole for the would-be agnostic or sceptic who may attempt to deny that a supernatural Revelation has been given, or that the soul's

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience.* [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

testimony with respect to that Revelation is not to be depended upon. The case against him is so forcible that it is for him to justify his position and to explain away all this evidence in a satisfactory manner. The actual facts of life, the universal testimony of human nature, the voice of conscience and of man's mystic sense, all testify in favour of the truth of the Historic Faith, and it is by its acceptance alone that human nature and human life, and indeed God Himself, become rational and intelligible.

Very justly therefore does the Catholic theologian build up his arguments on these solid grounds and demonstrate the gravity of the sin of unbelief. In view of evidence so abundant and so palpably and everywhere lying about us, that sin surely cannot be other than a grave one. And in view of these incontrovertible facts, we may confidently disregard the assertions of the "new" or indeed of any other theology. There has been, and there can be only one true theology. It is that which best and most fully and accurately defines and expresses the original supernatural truths disclosed, and which in and by its definitions, excludes and rejects all that human imagination and speculation may suggest with a view to their mutilation or modification. It is that definition of God and of His relation to the world through the Incarnation, which is based upon the clear and admitted statements of Christ, and of those interpretations of His statements which are contained in the Gospels and Epistles, and of the writings of His saints and doctors and martyrs throughout the

centuries. And no form of Modernism, however plausible, need disturb the mind that is determined to be true to itself and true to fact and to history. I would say again : that knowledge upon which the happiness and the peace of the soul depend, and by which its highest life is ensured has, thank God! not been made dependant upon the dicta of any individual scientist, or upon the speculations of any enterprising pseudo-theologian. It rests upon an infinitely sounder and more secure foundation than this. And that foundation has resisted the assault of minds subtler and more profound by far than any that the modern age has produced.

And we may be sure that it will stand when not even the names of the fashioners of these revived heresies will be remembered. Unhappily for its peace, the world is apt to take these matters too seriously and to run too readily after these theological will-o'-the-wisps. A little correct thinking would save it much pain and soul-anguish and much inevitable disillusionment.

It will be observed that the modern phantastic and unorthodox systems of Christianity for the most part emanate from the minds of men who figure in the newspapers and on platforms and who are apt to look out upon the world from the easy comfort of thei. study chairs—who are thinking and writing for men, not suffering and praying with them ; who conceive of the world and of the human soul, not as they really are, but as they imagine or wish them to be. The hard-working priest or clergyman, who daily

stands face to face with the actual miseries of life, who realizes his responsibility before God for every soul in his care, and who is the true friend of sinners and of publicans, has not only no sympathy with the "New" Theology and with modern "scientific" catechisms; he has a sort of ill-concealed contempt for them, because he knows them to be wholly worthless amidst the real sorrows of life and in the anguish and pain of the soul. He knows from the experience of his heart and of his life, that there is only one theology which can calm and satisfy the soul and which can sustain and comfort it in life and in death, and that that is the old and true theology of which Christ, the Incarnate Word Himself, laid the foundation, the truth of which the experience of centuries has confirmed, and which will most certainly be the theology of all balanced and right-thinking minds while the world lasts.[1]

[1] The following deeply suggestive experience may be of interest to the reader. To the thoughtful mind it should yield food for very serious thought. I had, in the course of my travels abroad, heard a good deal of the "New" Theology and of what the newspapers called its "thunderbolts." On my return to England I made myself acquainted with some of its literature. I found it hard, I must confess, to understand how it could prove attractive for so many intelligent minds. I thought that in this case, too, this might be accounted for, not by the force of its principles, but by some magnetic charm in the personality of the inventor. I decided to test this for myself, and I consequently one Sunday morning attended the service of the City Temple. I took my place in the long row of visitors waiting for admission. Two young men, evidently of the more intellectual type, finding that I was a new-comer and had been away from England, got into conversation with me. They told me something of the nature and extent of the movement. The sermon was preached from a simple and familiar text of Scripture, about the meaning of which there

But what are we to think of these self-constituted apostles of the "new" gospel who, in their boundless arrogance, lay their destroying hands upon that Creed from which man has drawn his highest inspirations and upon which he has based his fondest hopes; which most accurately expresses and corresponds with all that his soul experiences and longs for. Are they not fatally deceiving the world and themselves, and are they not increasing the misery and anguish of human life a thousandfold? Are their works not the last and best evidence of the Fall of man and of the consequent blindness and ignorance which have fallen upon the human understanding? For even if these blind leaders of the blind do not wholly succeed in misleading the better class of minds, they are sowing the seeds of doubt in numerous hearts, and are steadily increasing that large army of the religiously indifferent, which is the result of all this wrangling over theological questions and of this creation of new-thought movements. Can these systems of thought, moreover, be shown to have brought the smallest social or moral benefit to

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could be no possible doubt. I was amazed when I listened to what the preacher made the text to mean, and to his grotesque misinterpretation of it. Very possibly my face bore indication of what was going on in my mind. Indeed I was astonished at the boldness of the preacher no less than at the gullibility of his listeners. On leaving the building, the two young men came up to me and inquired what I thought of the performance. I admitted the ingenuity of the preacher and the cleverness of his feat of gymnastics; but, of course, I said, that could not, on any ground, be the meaning of his text. "Of course not," was the reply, "we know that; but think of the cleverness of it"!

mankind, and do they produce nobler forms of the spiritual life and of human unselfishness than those produced by the true original Gospel of Jesus Christ? Has any man yet been found who will give his health or his life or even surrender the good and pleasant things of this world in defence of this "new" gospel?

It is a matter of words and of words and of nothing but words, and of elaborately turned phrases, the precise meaning of which is, I am confident, often not clear even to those who construct them. They are calculated to entertain and to interest a Sunday audience of men and women who have a morbid craving for the novel and the exciting in religion, and upon whom the burdens of life may happen to weigh lightly; they are utterly meaningless, where men take themselves seriously and where they experience life's sorrows and pains and bitterness. They are manifestly worthless amidst the world's sufferings and sins, and when the shadow of death encompasses the soul. It is surely in such conditions of life and of soul that the truth and value of a religious doctrine can best be tested and that we can ascertain for ourselves whether such a doctrine be of God or of man. And since some of these conditions of life and of soul must sooner or later be those of all men, we may safely conclude that distracted human nature will, after a while, recover itself and come to its senses, and that it will, ere long, in faith and humility return to the Christ and His Gospel. There are already some unmistakable signs that this will certainly come to pass. The

best of the world's thought either shrinks from this dabbling in theological questions or pronounces, as we have seen, in favour of orthodox truth. It is but necessary that we should rightly understand and interpret its pronouncements.

Mystery, of course, remains and must always remain, seeing that the finite cannot fully apprehend and fathom the Infinite. A part only of the great world-scheme has been disclosed to us and in the matter of spiritual things and of the life of the soul in its relation to God, we must be content to the very end to see in part and "through a glass in a dark manner."[1]

"We cannot grasp the Infinite," writes the American Bishop Spalding; "language cannot express even what we know of the Divine Being, and hence there remains a background of darkness where it is possible to adore or to mock. But religion dispels more mystery than it involves. With it there is twilight in the world; without it, night."[2]

In the natural order, too, there are things the reality of which we know by an innate perception, but which nevertheless escape us the moment we attempt their explanation and definition.

"What is time?" says St. Augustine. "If no one asks me," he replies, "I know; but if I am asked to explain I do not know."[3]

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12 [2] *Ideals.*

[3] "Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio." (*Lib. xi. Confess. Cap. xiv., n.* 17.)

Thus the intellectualism of St. Thomas consisted in the acknowledgment of the ability of reason to attain a knowledge of natural truth of the higher order and to elucidate—*not to prove as a comprehend*—the mystery of faith. In other words, it is the heart which discerns and recognizes spiritual truth, while the intellect does its best to define and formulate it. But it is only too well aware that the best and most accurate definitions are imperfect and that the whole of Divine Truth cannot under any circumstances be adequately expressed in human language.

Who has not experienced this difficulty in the attempt to defend some truth of the Faith and who has not realized that the assault upon it often seems much more successful than its defence? The instructed Catholic knows only too well how great the perils are which lie along this road, and it is often on this account that he shrinks from discussion and argument. He knows that the very essence of the truth which he believes escapes definition and that he cannot easily, and without connecting it with other truths, explain it to the man who does not stand where the Church stands, and in whom the spiritual sense may be paralyzed or non-existent. No words of mine can better express this thought than Mr. Thorold has expressed it in his interesting work on "Catholic Mysticism":

"The claim of the Church on the individual conscience," he writes, "is not, however, solely based on evidence, however compelling of sanctity in others. Quod isti et istae cur non ego? And it is in his

own experience that the mystic will ultimately find his strongest motives for faith, for he will inevitably discover that the Great Object of his soul's desire grows clearer and nearer in exact proportion to the purity of his conscience and to the fidelity of his adherence to Catholic practice. This process is, of course, psychological rather than philosophical, and is therefore quite compatible with what schemes of examination of conscience call thoughts against Faith, with a more or less constant suggestion of speculative insecurity which, usually quiescent, may sometimes be stung into a strange fictitious activity by the irritant of an indiscreet apostle. In the case of those who have not had the privilege of early Catholic training, such a state of mind is, during the first few years of Catholic life, probably more or less inevitable. Nor has it the slightest psychological value. For the point is not, as the onlooker might think, that the believer is not quite sure, but just precisely that he is quite sure, and yet cannot help questioning. It is the co-existence of certitude and question on the same point that causes the poignancy of his pain. He questions in the abstract what he perceives to be true in the concrete. This trial, in its purely logical form, is not confined to those who embrace the Catholic Faith. Everyone must have gone through it who has come under the influence of the idealistic philosophy. The peculiar anguish of the believer is caused by the fact that the Object of Revealed Religion appeals to love rather than intellectual curiosity. Scepticism as regards the independent existence of chairs and

tables, or even of planetary systems, leaves the soul unruffled, but the mere shadow of doubt blurring the adorable Image of our Divine Redeemer makes the heart shiver. And yet it is perhaps this undercurrent of logically possible doubt that determines to some the finer edge, the rarer stuff of their faith. For faith, if no difficulties at all could be raised against it, would surely be a most 'mentally inexpensive' quality. There is more than a spice of the adventurer in the mystic."

III

The facts of experience with respect to Revelation summarized: the discord of human nature accounted for; the moral disorder cured and sin forgiven; the mystery and meaning of suffering explained; a true connection made with the supernatural order—Summary.

Now, to pass from the general to the particular, what, briefly, is the actual experience of the Christian soul with respect to the supernatural truths of the Faith? What are the effects universally produced when the will and the intellect submit themselves to their influence and when the heart seeks to place itself "in rapport" with these truths. I would summarize them as follows:

1. *In the first place, acceptance of the historic truth of Christ intelligently accounts for and explains the manifest discord which prevails in our moral nature. It leads to true self-knowledge and solves the mystery of evil, so far as a solution is possible.*

We have seen that this discord in our nature is one of the most self-evident facts in human life, and this is fully admitted by all right-thinking and honest minds. It is the ultimate cause of that Weltschmerz —that world-pain—which is the favourite theme of both the poet and the philosopher and which, in a variety of ways, finds expression in all forms of religious thought.

And we also know that the attempts of man, in every age and along various paths, to get nearer to the solution of the mystery and to understand himself and the problem of his being, have proved failures. The very creation of new systems of religious and philosophic thought to-day, occupying themselves with this problem, is incontrovertible evidence of this fact. And it is equally certain from the entire tone of our modern literature, that the latest and newest solutions of the problem have, as a matter of fact, proved no solutions at all. The non-Christian and pseudo-Christian world of to-day is as vague and unsettled about these matters, and is as eagerly looking for enlightenment, as it has ever been. In spite of its assertion that a Revelation has been given, it is still learning, yet manifestly not coming to a knowledge of the truth. And as a consequence, it continues unsettled and unhappy and ill at ease.

Now if human experience counts for anything at all, it furnishes conclusive evidence that in the historic Revelation of Christ alone the perplexing mystery is finally solved. For, whatever difficulties this solution may have for the speculative intellect, it has

none for the awakened conscience and for the heart. Who can doubt this who has studied the records of the thoughts and lives of the Apostles and disciples and of the great doctors and thinkers of the Church—who knows something of the history of early Christianity?

When the soul, enlightened by divine grace, submits itself to and embraces the teaching of Christ as to the origin of its internal discord, it recognizes in that teaching the voice of truth and, obeying that voice, the mind is satisfied. The soul reaches a kind of finality. By a certain inward sense or preception, which is authoritative, it becomes conscious that there is agreement between the external teaching and the internal testimony.

Its position, in fact, is not unlike that of a sick man, who is afflicted with some mysterious complaint, the nature and cause of which it has been found impossible to diagnose. As a consequence, he has suffered many things at the hands of many physicians, but has got worse rather than better. He has practically abandoned all hope of a cure, for all that the prescribed remedies have done for him has been to ease the pain and to temporarily relieve the distressing symptoms. But at last there comes one who seems to lay his finger upon the very root of the complaint. He has an intimate knowledge of the organism and its functions. He tells the patient, in simple words, what is wrong and where the root of the trouble lies. His account of the matter is different from that of all the other physicians and it creates in the patient's mind a

sense of wonder and amazement. But when he begins to think about it, he begins to realize that this one physician has beyond doubt spoken the truth, that he has made a correct diagnosis. The symptoms are just such as he has described them to be, and it seems after all not at all unlikely that the cause, too, to which he attributes them is the true one. There is moreover about the physician a strange certainty and authority; nothing approaching the sense of lingering doubt or misgiving. And, after a time, a corresponding sense of certainty is awakened in the patient. He begins to place confidence in the physician and experiences a willingness to submit himself to the treatment which he prescribes. He becomes conscious that he is at last in safe and reliable hands.

It is somewhat after this fashion that the sick soul enters into relationship with Christ. It is perplexed and puzzled about its distressing symptoms. It cannot fathom the true cause of its fatal disorder;—the sense of dissatisfaction and restlessness, of the uneasiness of conscience, of that craving for some higher good which it knows to exist, but which is nevertheless forever escaping it. It has tried a thousand remedies, but they have all proved worthless. They have relieved the symptoms for a time, it is true, and they have also, once or twice, caused forgetfulness of them, but they have not cured the disease itself; they have, in the end, but produced a keener sense of its existence and of its fatal character.

Christ's diagnosis of man's mortal disease alone

brings certainty and relief. It solves the harassing problem. It traces the sickness of the soul back to its remoter but true origin. It tells man that the relation between himself and God have been fundamentally disturbed ; that by pride and rebellion the faculties of the soul have become disordered, that in the representative and father of the race the race has fallen away and has been cut off from health, from happiness and from peace. It tells him that the sin-burdened soul cannot be happy until, in humility and penitence, it returns to God in His revealed and appointed way.

And the sick soul, recognizing the reasonableness of this diagnosis, confirmed as it is by such a variety of symptoms, becomes alert and attentive. It begins to address itself to the Divine Physician. It asks for further instruction and enlightenment. It assumes towards the Physician the attitude of a good and obedient patient. It turns its back upon the quacks and tinkers who have tried in vain to cure it. There grows up within it a consciousness that a radical cure is possible. And with this attitude of mind the perplexing problem is solved, the soul passes out of the sphere of doubt and uncertainty, and there comes over it the sense of a boundless peace and security. And this sense of peace and confidence is stable and unchanging. It continues and persists when all else in life breaks down and vanishes away ; when life itself begins to fail and decline.

These are the facts of universal Christian experience. They are the characteristics of the life of

the soul which has put itself "in rapport" with Christ and His teaching. Acceptance of that teaching is the entering of the soul upon its real cure and of a termination of the restless cravings and speculations of the intellect. The note which the Apostles sounded is the note of perfect certainty and assurance; "I know"; "I am persuaded," are the expressions which they employ. And it is the note of those who have come after their time—of those countless thousands who, in every age and of every race, have brought their sick souls to the Divine Physician. They have, under His treatment, and under it alone, found relief and healing and the solution of their doubts and their difficulties. No sane man can deny this, because the record of twenty centuries of Christian life and thought is before us. No philosopher can, in any other intelligible way, account for the phenomenon. Experience therefore manifestly indicates, that so far as man's fatal constitutional disorder is concerned, the original teaching of Christ, as the Catholic Church has formulated and preserved it, is the true account of the matter and that it is by acceptance of this teaching alone that the vexing problem of man's constitutional disorder and of his divided mind is solved.

2. *Acceptance of Historic Christianity, in the second place, furnishes the means by which man's moral disorder is cured, by which sin is actually forgiven and the soul is freed from its burden.*

There is probably no dogma of the Catholic

Faith, respecting which Christian experience has so emphatically and so finally delivered its verdict as that of the Atoning Death of Jesus Christ. Whatever philosophical or theological difficulties may, from time to time, have circled round this dogma, of its moral value and significance and of its soul-moving and soul-inspiring power there can be no doubt. Even some of our modern reconstructionists and higher critics are constrained to admit this, and it is indeed difficult to understand how they can make the attempt even to escape the inevitable inference which would seem to flow from their admissions.

"There must be some meaning," writes Sir Oliver Lodge, in the *Hibbert Journal*, "in the perennial experience of relief and renovation at the Cross. Was it not there that Christian's burden fell—type of many thousands of devout persons? Is there no regenerating agency at work in justification of this mass of real experience?"

"This I know," says Prof. Harnack,[1] "that Jesus Christ has not called the righteous to Himself, but those who trembled before Righteousness, and that the deepest and most earnest Christians embrace Jesus Christ, not only as the Prophet, but as the *Reconciler*. They do not, however, rest satisfied with seeing the Atonement only in the life-work of Christ. They consider also His passion and His death as vicarious. How can they do otherwise? If they, the sinners, have escaped justice, and He,

[1] In an article on *The Atonement in Religious Thought*, printed in the Christian World, London, of Dec. 7th, 1899.

the Holy One, has suffered death, why shall they not acknowledge that that which he has suffered was what they should have suffered? In presence of the Cross no other feeling, no other note, is possible. And for this reason it is of little use speculating on the 'saving value' of Christ's sufferings. To begin, in this region, to cast up reckonings is to lose the whole sacred impression of this divine fact upon the soul. Let us rather, with reverential reticence, gaze upon the Cross of Christ, from which God shines forth as the Infinite Love. It is a holy secret not understood of the profane, and 'yet the power of God and the wisdom of God.'"

It seems to me that we have, in this remarkable statement, the clue to all the difficulties which have been and are being advanced against this fundamental dogma of the Historic Christian Faith. These difficulties are, for the most part, due to theories and "aspects" which the speculative human intellect has suggested repecting this dogma. They do not and cannot touch the great dogma itself; for it is manifestly one of those mysteries of God which defies exact definition, but the truth and power of which is perceived directly by the receptive and enlightened human soul. It is to this direct perception of the soul to which all Christian experience, in every succeeding age of the Church's life, bears witness, and against which the attacks of the rationalistic philosophy and of false theological reasoning will most certainly be directed in vain. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Him-*

self by the bloody sacrifice of the Cross. This, in the briefest form, is the truth which is the very life of the Historic Christian Faith. It is what the Apostles held and taught, what generations of men have accepted and believed, for the sake of which untold thousands have been content to sacrifice worldly honours and possessions, health and earthly happiness and life itself, and which has most certainly been productive of the noblest heroism of which human nature is capable. It is the truth with which are bound up all the hopes and the happiness of our wayward race.

It is, of course, difficult to understand and to estimate the state of mind of the modern rationalizing theologian, who has lost all sense of the proportion of things, who is determined to ignore the sense of sin and estrangement from God which burdens the soul of the world and of his fellows, and who fondly imagines that his plausible reasonings will convince the world that these experiences have no real foundation in fact. Men who, at this hour of the day, and in view of the world's anguish and pain, can persuade themselves that these ancient heresies will meet with universal and permanent acceptance, will probably find it possible to persuade themselves of anything. For them, of course, the Cross of Christ has no meaning, since they are not conscious of its needs and are incapable therefore of appreciating and of discerning its regenerating and reconciling virtue. With that fatal facility of speech and of phrase which characterizes their statements and their writings, they will find means

of disposing of this dogma, as they have disposed of that of the Fall and of original sin. By some cynical expression, some judicious appeal to "enlightened" intelligence, by the presentation of some wholly unreasonable and unorthodox theory respecting the dogma, they will accomplish all this. And they will inevitably carry a certain number of superficial minds with them. It is so easy to throw ridicule upon a misstated and disconnected truth of the Catholic Religion! But they will contend in vain against the incontrovertible facts of human experience, against the testimony of myriads of Christian souls who, from the Apostles down to our time, have realized the saving virtue of the Cross of Christ, who have felt that there, and there alone, the mystery of sin and of the discord of life is solved, and that it is there, and there alone, that the heavy burden which weighs upon the soul is lifted. And for those who have passed through these undefinable experiences, so mysterious and yet so real and true in their force, all the speculations and theories as to the "saving value" of Christ's sufferings, which are the delight of speculative theologians, are utterly worthless and beside the mark. They feel, as Prof. Harnack expresses it, that "to cast up reckonings is to lose the whole sacred impression upon the soul." It is for them a holy secret, not understood by the profane, and yet "the wisdom of God and the power of God."

I am confident that belief in this central truth of the Catholic Faith, in its original historic sense, will not return to men until they become once more true

to themselves, and true to the testimony of their hearts, and until they learn to trust the voice of God in their own souls rather than the shallow reasonings of "new" theologians, or the results of scientific dabbling in spiritual problems. It may surely be reasonably assumed that in so great a matter as this God cannot be supposed to have misled the world or to have left Himself without a witness. It remains certain, beyond all possibility of doubt, that human experience witnesses to the truth of the historic doctrine respecting the death of Christ, as Christ Himself and the Apostles taught it, as the saints and martyrs understood and believed it, and as the Catholic Church has formulated it in her Creeds and her teaching.

And the process by which the soul recognizes and confirms the truth of this doctrine would seem to be somewhat after this fashion. We have seen what experience has to say respecting the facts of our human nature: its limitations, its fatal discord and disorder, its restlessness and uneasiness, its craving for some sign and token from that unseen world from which it is estranged, but to which it knows itself to be related. We have also seen that there is in man and in nature no remedy for this internal disorder, no known means of making true connection with that unseen world. We cannot even clearly determine what the cause of our difficulty precisely is, and where those impressions originate which destroy our happiness and embitter our life. We have seen that none but Christ has made and can make a correct diagnosis of the nature of our moral

disorder. We realize all this more fully as we approach Him more closely, and as we put ourselves in personal relation with Him, as we seek to breathe His spirit and to catch something of that life and world in which He moves and has His being. And in this closer intercourse with Him there rises up before the soul the clearer vision of that other and higher world-order, and of laws and principles different from those which govern the ordinary natural life. There comes, in the light of that world, a keener consciousness of fatal and constitutional defects, of open and festering soul-wounds, of low and earth-bound desires and ambitions—of a radical estrangement of the soul from Him Who should be its life. There are born within it new thoughts and emotions. And with these new thoughts and emotions there come increased cravings for that higher world, for its peace and purity and holiness, in the attainment of which the awakening soul realizes the true accomplishment of its destiny and the end of life. There comes the deepening consciousness of that personal sin which has effectually separated the heart from God, and for which no human act or prayer can make adequate atonement.

And it is in this state of mind, and with these deep convictions, that the distressed soul turns towards the Cross of Christ and recognizes in that Cross and Sacrifice both "the wisdom of God and the power of God." It realizes, in some way it cannot fully define, that this bloody death of the Divine and Holy One, involving as it does, a completely surrendered will, a perfect obedience, a

boundless all-embracing love, is God's way of bridging the gulf and of once more making it possible for man to have access to Him. By an act of faith and of love, impelled as we believe by grace, the soul identifies itself personally with that bloody death. And with this act of soul-identification with the Divine Redeemer there comes upon it a strange certainty, a boundless assurance, a transcendental consciousness that here, and here alone, the mystery is solved and that here, and here alone, the open door is found which leads to happiness and to God.

This, in simple and untheological language, is what the awakened soul experiences in view of the Cross of Christ. It embodies what in one form or another human experience and true Theology have to say about the matter. It is in the strictest sense an operation or transaction in the supernatural sphere, before which the natural intellect stands abashed and paralyzed, and before which human criticism and analysis are helpless. It is a revelation of the Spirit to the spirit, respecting which the soul[1] alone can speak with certainty and assurance. And it seems to me that the history of two thousand years and the lives and writings of the Church's saints and martyrs, indicate clearly that about the soul's voice in the matter there is no uncertain sound.

It is strange indeed that even the attempt should be made in the present age to question and undermine all this, and that men should commit the

[1] I am, of course, using this and other terms in the accepted popular sense.

blunder of arguing out a great spiritual truth within the sphere of the intellect. It does not seem to occur to them that their very method is at fault, and that they are simply like children attempting to bring down the moon by throwing stones at it.

If a supernatural world-order exists, it is surely reasonable to conclude that it has laws and principles of its own, the nature and operations of which necessarily lie outside the sphere of ordinary human discernment and criticism. Were it otherwise, how could there be about such truths the element of authority and certainty and permanence; how could the sick soul hope to find in such truths a safe spiritual anchorage?

Each succeeding age would present the Christian world with some different view about the matter, and the soul, instead of constructing and building up its spiritual life upon a firm and immovable foundation, would be a prey to doubt and uncertainty and would dissipate its energies in endless philosophical and theological speculation. Christianity, instead of terminating doubt and controversy and of bringing light to the soul, would thus become the very source of greater confusion and disorder, and would complicate the moral problem of life a thousandfold. That this is so may be seen from a comparison between the attitude of thought which prevails in the non-Catholic sphere and that which characterizes the Catholic world. In the non-Catholic sphere the confusion of ideas respecting the most fundamental of Christian truths is to-day as great as it ever was. It boasts of a variety of views and

"aspects" of the Atonement and work of Jesus Christ; its pulpits are a very Babel of voices, where the restless human intellect finds a fruitful field for a display of its operations, and where it delights in occupying itself with the attempt to define the undefinable. It will not believe and submit itself until and unless it fully understands, and it rejects what it finds to be beyond its definitions. It employs a method of discovering spiritual truth by which spiritual truth never has been and never can and never will be discovered. It keeps the sick and distressed soul in a state of doubt and perplexity and, as a consequence, in a state of spiritual paralysis and inactivity. It is for evermore "casting up reckonings," is for evermore speculating on the "saving value" of Christ's suffering, and is thus losing "the whole sacred impression of this divine fact upon the soul."

How different is the atmosphere which characterizes the Catholic sphere of life and thought. Within that sphere Christianity quietly accomplishes its mission in the world and to the soul, and brings healing and peace and finality in its train. The Catholic, supposed to be so servilely submissive to tradition and authority, is, as a matter of fact, the only really logical Christian. He receives the Revelation of Christ on the terms on which it is given; his faith lays hold upon the mystery proposed, and when that mystery has done its work in his heart and soul he adds to it knowledge, seeks to understand it in all its bearings and in its relation to other truths, and enters more deeply into all the Church has to say and to teach about it. But he

does not believe because he understands, or because he thinks he understands; he seeks to understand because he believes, and because there is in his heart a conviction and a certainty deeper by far than that which any degree of understanding can produce. His attitude towards Divine Truth is not that of ignorance, but that of the right kind of knowledge. It is by soul-perception, by revelation of God, as he believes, that he accepts and embraces it. He is not unlike the person who delights in the fragrance and colouring of a beautiful flower, as it exhibits its exquisite proportions, its artistic shadings, its delicate leaf and perfume. It is the flower as a whole which invites his admiration, and which fills him with delight. He cannot understand how any person can be interested in pulling it to pieces in order to see how it is constructed, and how anyone can imagine that the flower will, after such treatment, retain its beauty and fragrance and appeal to his soul in an equally forcible manner.

For the Catholic, the divine sacrifice on Calvary is, in a mystical manner, perpetuated on the altar. It is like the first sacrifice, a supernatural act taking place under conditions of time and space, and he bows before its mystery in silent awe and adoration. His very instinct tells him that he is in the courts of God, and that it is here not a question of intellectual scrutiny and conclusions, but of "rapport with Deity" and of soul-experiences and soul-operations. It is God, not man, Who is speaking and working, and it is for man to bend low and to adore, not to pry and question and speculate.

And, as a consequence, the Catholic draws from that altar and sacrifice his highest thoughts and his holiest inspirations. It is a source of never-ceasing joy and consolation and spiritual renewal to him, and he will forego anything rather than lose the impression which this divine act exercises upon his soul. It never occurs to him to enquire into the details of the divine operation, or to withhold his worship and adoration until his mind is quite clear about it all and until he fully understands. On the contrary, he knows very well that he will never fully understand, and that what God exacts of him is submission and faith and obedience, and that diligent soul-culture by which the finite can lay hold on the Infinite. God has spoken by His Church; a hundred evidences, conclusive for all men of good will, go to show this; the very existence of the Church to-day demonstrates it. And God confirms the truth of His message by the spirit speaking within to the receptive and humble and expectant soul; and by a method wholly beyond the ken of any inquisitive mind, agreement is found to exist between the voice speaking without and that speaking within. It is thus that the Catholic Christian experiences "the whole sacred impression of Divine Truth upon his soul." And this attitude of mind is surely the correct and logical, and indeed the Apostolic one.

At the foot of the Cross on Mount Calvary, there was surely silence and adoration. Instinct itself would seem to tell us how utterly the sound of any human voice, discoursing on the merits of the precious blood-shedding, would have been out of

place. It was "the whole sacred impression" which was working its effect upon the souls of those present. And at the foot of our Catholic altars to-day the same solemn silence is observed. God is evoked, as it were, and enjoyed, and the reality of His presence is established by His immediate operations upon the soul, not by discussions and arguments about those operations. Will the non-Catholic mind ever come to perceive this distinction and learn to appreciate the beauty and consistency and apostolicity of Catholic teaching and worship?

And from this same great Sacrifice, perpetuated upon the Catholic altar, there flows into the receptive and penitent soul actual pardon of sin, and the soul is freed from its heavy burden. It is the source of the grace which meets the soul in the Sacrament of Penance. This surely is a pre-eminent fact of Christian experience, and there is scarcely a page in the New Testament which does not record it and bear witness to it. Who can fail to discern the note of joyfulness in the consciousness of forgiven sin which characterizes all the Apostolic writings?

When Sir Oliver Lodge tells us that "the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins, and still less about their punishment," and when Mr. Campbell tells the world that "sin is merely selfishness, not individual disobedience to the will of God," they are expressing ideas which have, no doubt, become their own individual convictions. And we can scarcely be surprised that these ideas meet with ready and wide-spread acceptance. They are in

keeping with the spirit of the times, and they have about them that air of intellectual superiority and reasonableness which has such a fascination for the "natural" man. By the very constitution of his moral nature he is impatient of anything that suggests the supernatural, or the other-world-order. He is infinitely more at ease before the pulpit or the platform than at the foot of the Cross or before the Christian altar.

But does such teaching solve the problem which confronts the troubled human conscience, or does it help to lift the heavy burden from the souls of sin-stricken men?

It is the religion of the intellectual and the cultivated, it never has been and never can be the religion of the "common" man. A mere glance at the theology which attempts to expound and to systematize these ideas demonstrates this. For, in these attempts, no account is taken of the facts of universal human experience and of those manifestations of conscience, to which the truth of Christ appeals, and without the existence of which its acceptance would scarcely have been possible. There is surely nothing in this world of which we can be more certain than the fact that the Apostles and early disciples and martyrs, bore no kind of resemblance to "the higher man of to-day."

"It may surely be held without unorthodoxy," writes Sir Oliver Lodge,[1] "that there are two ways of overcoming sin and sinful tendencies: one the

[1] *Hibbert Journal.*

direct way of concentrating attention on them with brooding and lamentation; the other the indirect and, as I think, the safer and more efficacious and altogether more profitable way, of putting in so many hours of work per day and of excluding weeds from the garden by cultivation of healthy plants."

This sounds remarkably rational and sensible, and yet there is surely a great fallacy underlying the statement. And this fallacy consists in a forgetting of the circumstance, that behind the act of sin and sinful tendencies there lie the troubled and uneasy conscience, and the restless and disordered will, which knows itself to be at war with itself and with God, and which is ever seeking for the means of relief and for that which will set the internal wrongness right. And if "the higher men of to-day" are not conscious of these moral manifestations, or elect to ignore them, the great mass of mankind most certainly are conscious of them and do not choose to ignore them, and that great mass of mankind have yet to learn that their soul-wrongness can be righted "by ceasing to concentrate attention upon it, or by putting in so many hours of work per day."

To tell a sin-stricken soul such things as these would be analogous to advising a sick man to get rid of his sickness by not thinking about it, or to take plenty of exercise in the open air, without making any attempt to treat the sickness and to make it possible for him to take such exercise. What is thus effected, both in the moral and physical

order, is a mere transitory, or temporary, or half-cure, which leaves the malady itself to run its fatal course.

The third and right course to be adopted surely is to discover and use the means by which the sickness itself can be cured, by which the conscience can be relieved, and by which conditions can be produced that are calculated to lead to really healthy manifestations in the inner and the outer life. Man clearly is a free and responsible agent, and whether "the higher man of to-day" likes it or not, he has had superadded to his natural constitution an inconvenient thing called conscience, and it is the manifestation of this inconvenient thing which is the real problem and difficulty in the matter.

We may ultimately succeed in persuading a sin-stricken man not to worry ; we may make him forget the past by providing him with healthy occupation of mind and of body ; but we cannot by these means soothe his conscience, or set that internal wrongness right in which the sin originated, and which it has accentuated. If this were possible, the last word on Religion and on the Cross of Christ would surely have been spoken long ago !

We have here an illustration of the superficial mode of thinking in which some of our modern philosophers and amateur theologians indulge, and the manner in which they evade the real issues at stake, and the constant and manifest facts of human experience. Can we be surprised at the increasing confusion of thought which characterizes the life of our day ?

Here, too, then, we have to get back to simple things, and to become true to ourselves, leave sophistry and speculation far behind us and trust the voice of God, speaking without in the teaching of the Church, and speaking within in the inner courts of the soul in confirmation of that teaching. We must seek to study the truths of Christ, not in the armchair or before the fashionable pulpit, but in the highways of life, where men fall and sin and suffer, and where one stands face to face with the stern realities of the moral life. We must study them in the hospitals, the reformatories, the insane asylums,[1] by the sick and the dying-bed and the

[1] The following interesting and suggestive incident was published in one of the English newspapers a little time ago :

"The following story," says the writer, "does not shadow forth any interpretation of the mystery, but it does suggest that there is perhaps one factor in madness of which the pathologist is not usually disposed to take account. The tale is told to me by one who for many years was a charge attendant in one of the largest lunatic asylums in this country. In those days, he confesses, he did not reflect upon the underlying mystery in madness ; he found himself a wheel in a big machine, and did the work appointed to him with precision and care, but without intellectual impulse. It was not until the incident had happened which I now tell that he began to think and see ; and from that day to this the impression of the spiritual mystery has never deserted him.

"He was going his rounds at midnight. The huge and hideous building was silent except for the sound of his feet on the stone corridors, and the muffled sighs and moans of the unfortunate paupers. The attendant thought no more of those sounds than one thinks of the wind in the chimney or the groan of old furniture. But as he approached one of the enormous wards his thoughts did for a moment run on before him to a poor creature lying in that room, to whom, he knew, kind death was now beating its way through time. Would he find the madman dead, or would he find him babbling in feverish dreams of things and sights and thoughts of which our sanity has no cognizance ?

open grave. We must ask ourselves there: Have these modern neo-Christian speculations any real

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"He entered the long ward, and stood for a moment looking to the dusky end, across those lines of rumpled beds in which pale madness hugged itself in dreams. Save for the discordant breathing, and the occasional twitch of a limb, all was silent and motionless. It was the same blurred page of eternity; the same mockery of night. He began his solitary tour of inspection. Down the centre of the sleeping ward he went slowly and perfunctorily, with tired eyes looking at every huddled bed upon his right side before turning at the end to study those upon his left. How often had he gone down between these lunatics! How often had he looked and never comprehended! The common round, the daily task!

"As he went forward he heard a noise upon his left, a little behind him, and turning round he beheld the poor dying lunatic rising out of bed. The sad and friendless madman thrust back the clothes, brought his feet slowly to the floor, and then stood up with white and strangely quiet face. The attendant, thinking he was in delirium, moved back to help him into bed. But before he had taken a few paces, as though aware only of his own presence in the ward, the dying lunatic kneeled solemnly down at the side of the bed, buried his face in his hands, and began to pray aloud.

"The attendant tells me that never before and never since did his ears listen to prayer so fervent, so wonderful, so sublime. The words came quietly, slowly, orderly, but they were each one heavy with almost unimaginable earnestness, and seemed as though they were breathed from the lips of a mighty soul pressed close to the very ears of Deity. He asked for forgiveness, and he made supplication for help. From the side of his pauper bed, in the midst of those sleep-breathing madmen, the hushed and fervent voice of this hitherto dumb soul climbed sacredly to the Almighty, asking the Eternal to forgive him the sins of which he had been guilty, and to bow down His Heaven and come and save him. There was no frenzy, no chaotic jumble of words, no aimless sentimentalism. As spirit to spirit, this once hopeless and dangerous lunatic prayed in that haunting scene for God's clemency and Heaven's help, as though the illusions of madness had rolled suddenly away, and he was looking straight into the Holy of Holies, and was unafraid.

"All prayers I have heard since, says the attendant, have never reached the fervency, the pathos, or the sublimity of

meaning for our life; have they any redeeming and restoring value or virtue; do they help us, in the very least degree, to solve the maddening problem of life and to bear its burdens? Can they be regarded as in any sense taking the place of that Cross of Christ, to which the sorrow-stricken can and do look up with patient hope, from which the suffering and dying can and do draw strength for their conflict, to which the sinner can and does turn for mercy and for pardon?

Does not the very phraseology of the "New" Theology pronounce its condemnation, and shut it out from practical service in the life of man? Does not all true Christian experience repudiate it? Who, for instance, would even dream of telling a poor dying widow of the pantheistic god of this ancient heresy, who, for some reason unknown to us, is evolving a world and human life amidst infinite pain and anguish and suffering, and who is far more concerned with the welfare of the race than he is with the individual soul? Who would tell her that the trouble of her soul is all fancy and imagination, that sin is best overcome by right action and by willing service for the happiness and well-being of one's fellows, that "atonement and salvation should only be construed in terms of the foregoing," and

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that man's prayer. I was spellbound for the time, and stood motionless, fearing to tread, lest I should break the connection of that soul in supplication to its Maker.

"And when the prayer was finished, the man rose up from his knees, climbed into his bed, laid his head upon the pillow, and through the little wicket-gate of sleep presently entered the fields of eternity."

that there is no saviour, no sin-bearer, no burden-lifter for mankind. The poor thing would either not understand a word of all this, or, if she understood, she would reject and repudiate it all; she would know by instinct, that the voice pronouncing these things is not the voice of the true Shepherd, of the God to Whom her heart and her soul bear witness. Besides this her life is ebbing away, and she has no longer any opportunity of purchasing her future happiness by right action and by service in the interests of her fellows. She is troubled by her past sins and neglects, by the approaching judgment, by the thought of the helpless children she is leaving behind.

What she can and does understand and that to which her soul responds is the doctrine of the personal God of love, Who is the Father of mankind, but from Whom mankind has become estranged by sin and self-will, Who, by the thorny way of pain and suffering and submission, is leading His distracted children back to Himself, and Who has Himself devised the means by which the penitent soul may cast down the burden of sin and have immediate access to Him What she can and does understand and what, as a matter of fact and experience, relieves the anguish of her soul, eases her conscience, and gives her confidence as regards herself and those she leaves behind, is the Cross of Christ and the reality of the saving and healing virtue which flows from that Cross into her truly penitent and humble soul. It seems to me that the utter inadaptability of the "new" theological teaching to man's greatest needs

is one of the many proofs of its unsoundness and falseness.

And it is most certainly true that in acceptance of the historic doctrine of the Atoning Death of Jesus Christ there are furnished the means by which sin is actually forgiven, and the soul is freed from its burden. Universal human experience confirms this, and we have seen that even those, whose mode of thought leads them to attack other truths of the Historic Faith, are constrained to admit this. They would, indeed, find it difficult to account for this remarkable fact of human experience on other grounds.

And we are here, surely, on purely supernatural ground. For we have seen and we know from our personal experience, that nature and the devices of men do not provide us with the means by which the conscience can be relieved and the burden be lifted. If, therefore, the burden is lifted and the soul is allowed to grow free, the power which accomplishes these things must have its source in the order which is above nature.

And if this consciousness of forgiven sin, consequent upon a right attitude of the soul to the Divine Sin-Bearer, is experienced by those who view the matter from the general and subjective standpoint, how much more is it experienced by those who, in the Sacrament of Penance, place themselves in more immediate and personal relation with the Sin-Bearer, who humble themselves to the dust by a detailed confession of sin, and over whom Christ

Himself pronounces the word of pardon by His minister.

Millions of Catholic souls throughout the world bear testimony, by their practice, to the reality of this sacramental remission of sin, and innumerable non-Catholic souls, brought to this cleansing ordinance by the grace of conversion, join in their testimony. The modern sceptical psychologist would, I think, find it a difficult, if not a hopeless task, to account for these unique experiences, shared in by men and women of the most diverse races and modes of thought and education, by some theory of early training, or environment, or suggestion. We would, on the ground of such theories, have to reject the credibility of any fact of human experience, and the possibility of attaining to certainty of any kind and on any subject would vanish away. We have, therefore, I reason, in these stable and very real experiences, proof positive, so far as such proof is attainable, of the truth of this great historic doctrine, and of agreement between the voice of the teaching Church without and of the suffering and sin-sick soul within. And I am confident that here, too, a distressed world will only regain its moral balance and will recover its lost heritage when it will be content to abandon argument and controversy and become obedient to the voice of that witness which God Himself has placed in the heart.

It is often a source of astonishment to me that intelligent and reflecting persons can fail to discern the presence and operation of the Supernatural in the Catholic Church.

I have already spoken of the Catholic Altar and of the soul-moving power of its Mystic Sacrifice—admittedly a source of never-failing inspiration to the devout child of the Church; the most effective means, most certainly, by which the soul is kept in vital contact with the supernatural world, and by which it is again and again recalled to a sense of its existence and its claims.

But this is equally true as regards the Sacrament of Penance, by the administration of which the benefits of the Divine Sacrifice on Calvary are applied to the individual soul, and by means of which the heaviest of all human burdens is lifted. Indeed, if any man desires evidence of the existence and action of the Supernatural in the world to-day, let him spend a little time in a Catholic Church, on a day and at a time when confessions are heard, and let him take to heart what is there enacted before his eyes. Can he find a rational explanation of that perpetual moral miracle which is there taking place and incessantly repeating itself? Can he explain how it comes to pass that human nature, so proud and arrogant and self-confident, so reserved and reticent in all that relates to the inner life, so ready to find excuses for its meanest actions and to hide them from the eye of man, finds it possible to humbly kneel before a child of Adam, to lay bare its most secret sins, to acknowledge them and ask pardon of them, and willingly submit itself to correction and punishment?

And that human nature represented by every age and condition of life, by the man of culture and

social position no less than by the humble toiler, and by the old and the young and the rich and the poor. How comes it to pass, I would ask, that week by week, or month by month, these men and women, so diverse in character, in education and in views of life, can pass through this greatest of all humiliations, and can gain this marvellous moral victory over their natural tendencies and dispositions? Are they all under a delusion and misapprehension? Are they all the victims of some fundamental misconception or auto-suggestion? Are they all deceiving themselves in the matter of the greatest and highest of all human concerns?

It seems to me that it is from this point of view, not from that of the modern "new" theologian, that we must examine this matter, and that it is here, in these constant and manifest facts of a deep soul-experience, that we must look for the truth or untruth of a great Christian doctrine. These humble souls submit themselves to this trying ordeal because they have heard the forgiving voice of God speaking to them in these sacred ministrations, and they have experienced in themselves, as a great and abiding reality, the actual fact of divine mercy and pardon. The Divine Sin-Bearer has visited them and has wrought in them the greatest of all miracles, and, as a consequence, that burden which weighed upon them so heavily, and which they found it impossible to remove themselves, has been lifted.

It is certain, then, from the abundant and universal facts of human experience, that acceptance of

the original historic teaching of Christ, as the Catholic Church has formulated and preserved it, does furnish the means by which our moral disorder is cured, by which sin is actually forgiven, and the soul is freed from its burden. And for the accomplishment of these things it is but necessary that the soul's attitude towards this teaching should be the right one: that the spiritual eyes should be opened and the spiritual ears unstopped, and that the entire nature should become disposed to listen to the faintest whisper of God's voice, and to learn to distrust the voices of men. The voice of God speaks in accents of certainty and assurance; it tells of mercy, of pardon, of grace and of peace. It brings its own divine evidence with it. The voices of men are harsh and contradictory and discordant. They leave the heart distracted and ill at ease, and there never is in those voices that note of certainty and finality for which the human soul is hungering, and without which the best religious teaching is inadequate and worthless. A very world, surely, of true philosophy is contained in the following beautiful verses:

"What would'st thou, O my soul?
I have sinned and I would fly
Where I might hide me from the Almighty's eye."

"Hast thou the dark forest pierced
Where never sun has shone?
I heard His voice, as Adam, walk the noon."

"Hast thou the scorched desert tried,
Where death and silence reign?
He called to me, as once He called to Cain."

"Hast thou beneath the ocean plunged,
The hollow of the dead?
I found Him there, as Jonah did, and fled."

"Hast thou above the stars
The vast empyrean soared?
He spoke, and lo! the stars adored His word."

"Hast thou the vast regions seen
Of everlasting ire?
I saw Him there, as Moses did, in fire."

"Hast thou around thy spirit rolled
The substance of the night?
He looked on me and made the darkness light."

"Hast thou assayed the Infinite
Beyond all space to flee?
I found the only Infinite is He.

"What would'st thou, O my soul?
I have sinned and I know not where
My safety is from Him Whose face I fear."

"Return whence thou cam'st;
Thou can'st not fly.
Thy hope alone and refuge sole is—God."

3. *Acceptance of historic Christianity, in the third place, intelligently explains the mystery and meaning of suffering and enables man not only to bear it, but by its means to attain to the highest perfection.*

I do not propose, in this connection, to consider the problem of human pain or suffering from the philosophic and scientific point of view. Very little reflection goes to show that both science and philosophy can only deal with secondary causes and that they must ever leave the essential mystery,

which lies behind them, unexplained. We must therefore either give up all attempts to solve this mystery, or we must receive the explanation of it by revelation from God. The variety of existing explanations to-day indicate, as a matter of fact, that human intelligence has not got any nearer to the real solution of the mystery, while Christian experience goes to show, that the explanation furnished by Revelation has been accepted by the best minds to be a satisfactory and intelligent one.

And what Revelation declares is, that pain and suffering, both moral and physical, have been introduced into human life by the Fall of man, that by virtue of the Cross of Christ, however, they have assumed a redemptive and propitiatory character and that, patiently and submissively borne, in union with the mind and spirit of Christ, they become the means of our highest spiritual development, and thus ultimately lead the soul back to God. And this interpretation of the matter would seem to fit in perfectly with what our own highest moral instincts and intuitions suggest.

I would here again quote an author who cannot be said to be favourable to orthodox Christianity, but who has many true and striking things to say, when he allows the voice of his heart to speak.

"No reflection of the reason," writes Professor Harnack, "no deliberation of the intelligence, will ever be able to expunge from the moral ideas of mankind the conviction that injustice and sin deserve punishment, and that everywhere where a

just man suffers atonement is made, which puts us to shame and purifies us. It is a conviction which is impenetrable, for it comes out of those depths in which we feel ourselves to be a unity and out of the world which lies behind the world of phenomena. Mocked and denied, as though it had long perished, this truth is indestructibly preserved in the moral experience of mankind. These are the ideas which from the beginning onward have been roused by Christ's death and have as it were played about it."

Now there are, roughly and broadly speaking, two points of view from which human suffering is apt to be regarded, and these points of view divide mankind into two classes.

There are, in the first place, those who reject or will not recognize the true Christian aspect of the matter and who, as a consequence, resent suffering and rebel against it. They would, if they could, efface it from the life of man, and they even imagine that it can be effaced. We are all familiar with this type of mind, and we know full well what the effects of this mental attitude are apt to be. Sufferers of this kind often present a perplexing problem both to the physician and to the clergyman. They are peevish and irritable and ungracious. They make unreasonable demands upon their friends and relations and are full of bitter murmurings and complaints. They are incessantly engaged in a mental conflict with the mysterious power which has brought the trouble upon them and which has thus cut them off from the joys of life. They often

pass through unspeakable mental and moral anguish, and are a source of the keenest distress to all who come in contact with them. If it is a case of physical disease and of a sick-bed, there is about that sick-bed an atmosphere of disquietude and agitation which is perceptible to all who approach it. Pathetic in the extreme are sometime the devices which tenderness will suggest for the relief of such sufferers, but which nevertheless entirely fail to bring relief. There is, we know it only too well, no remedy in the order of nature which will relieve suffering borne in this spirit. I have so often observed this in the experiences of my life. I remember some years ago coming in contact with a man, whose state of mind prevented even death from terminating his sufferings. He was a young man of great physical strength and vigour, who had suddenly been stricken by a mortal disease which, however, had left his mind wholly unimpaired. That mind was in a state of persistent and violent resentment. Nothing could persuade him to reconcile himself to the inevitable. He was afraid of the future; but he was too full of bitterness to make any preparation for it. He fought death inch by inch, as it were. And this extraordinary exertion of will-power and of resentment, while it intensified his suffering, tended to prolong the struggle and to keep him alive. The physician attending him pronounced it as his opinion that he would not die until his mind and will had become more submissive—until he "gave in," as he expressed it, to the inevitable. After a while, better counsels prevailed and there came some calm over

the mind, and it was only then that death terminated the struggle. But it was an unforgettable experience for those who had witnessed the conflict!

And this attitude of mind produces similar effects in all the minor bodily troubles and ailments of human life. We can study the matter in modern sanatoriums and institutions for the cure of nervous disease:—the self-centred mind, the restless and fretful will, the craving for diversion and change, the incessant occupation of the mind with new systems of treatment, with schemes of travel and with the latest religious devices supposed to bring healing and relief. Those of us who have travelled much can tell interesting stories of such complaining and rebellious patients, intercourse with whom is sometimes nothing less than an infliction, and whom one feels to be indeed burdens to themselves and to others. The extraordinary thing is that so few seem to discern where the sting of all this suffering really lies, and where the only effective means are to be found by which it can be extracted.

When it is a matter of moral and mental suffering, of worry and anxiety, consequent upon the difficulties of life, of family-jars, or of blighted hopes and ambitions, the effect of this attitude of mind is perhaps more disastrous still. It leads to an utterly joyless and hopeless life, to a home life from which all peace and happiness have departed, and it is the state of mind which in the world of to-day, and especially in certain classes of life, often terminates in suicide or in the insane asylum.

Is it a wonder, when we come to think about the

matter, that the inanities of Christian Science and the various new-thought systems attract and fascinate the multitude, and that the world watches with the keenest interest the researches of the scientist who is looking for the bacillus of old age and of death? What are these movements, when all is said and done, but the frantic efforts of rebellious man to escape pain and suffering at any cost, and if it be possible, to escape death itself. For this state of mind clearly there is not only no relief, but it most certainly leaves the mystery of suffering wholly unsolved. It but tends to intensify the bitterness of the sting which lies at its root.

How utterly different, on the other hand, is the attitude of the Catholic Christian, who discerns the deeper meaning lying behind the mystery of pain, who recognizes in the Cross a redemptive and regenerative process, and who, in union with the Divine Sin-Bearer, has learnt to embrace suffering as the most effective means of his spiritual education. Any serious attempt to illustrate this would be equivalent to producing an abbreviated history of life and thought in the Catholic Church throughout the two thousand years of her existence. And we might even go behind this and quote from the Old Testament Records, which tell of men and women who, enlightened by God, had come to understand the true meaning of suffering. The history of saints and martyrs, of heroic missionaries, of noble-minded men and women, from the earliest dawn of Christianity to the present day, is before us. And that history is even now being written in every

humble life that is being offered up for Christ's sake, in every case of suffering gladly and patiently borne, in every instance of true soul-emancipation and deliverance wrought by these means. And with what scorn does this great noble army look upon the modern Christian Scientist who, by his mental tricks and suggestions, manages to delude himself for a season, who makes the Cross of Christ of no effect, and whose illogical attitude is best illustrated by the fact that he has in the end to go the way of all flesh—has, like his fellows, to pass through the painful experiences of the decrepitude of old age and of death! These latter are, in the truest sense, forms of pain and of suffering,—with some men indeed the keenest of them all, and the very circumstance that in no single case has his philosophy enabled him to escape them, should in itself be sufficient to convince the Christian Scientist of the absurdities of his belief. That belief but tends to aggravate the bitterness of suffering by failing to extract its sting, and it provides no stay and consolation for the mind at the approach of the last enemy. It must surely be a source of never-ceasing anguish to a Christian Scientist that he has not yet, in his own time, discovered the secret by which the delusion of old age and death can be effaced from "mortal mind."

The fact remains, and is but too apparent, that Historical Christianity alone intelligently explains the mystery and meaning of suffering, and that its explanation alone enables man to bear it. Human experience is absolutely unanimous on this point, and we have in this circumstance another evidence of the

falseness of the "New" Theology. The real sting in human suffering clearly is the sense of its aimlessness, the inability to discern in it any meaning or purpose. It is this which produces the rebellious will—the antagonistic and fighting attitude of the mind. The mind resents its infliction, it feels itself injured and aggrieved because it sees in it a fundamental injustice, an undeserved and useless calamity. It struggles with the perplexing and confounding mystery, and consequently increases its pain and its anguish a thousandfold. The Cross of Christ and the soul-knowledge which it brings solve the mystery and, as a consequence, they subdue the will and calm the mind. They act upon the mind in a soothing and reconciling manner. By exhibiting the true character of sin and its inevitable consequences, the Cross of Jesus mystically connects sin with suffering, and points out the way of victory, of triumph, and of reconciliation and soul-union with God. And with this there passes from the mind all rebellion, all doubt and misgiving; and indeed so deep and great becomes the soul's conviction on this point that pain and suffering are positively invited and sought for, and that the degree of God's goodness and mercy is measured by the degree of suffering which He inflicts.

Such manifestly is the unique and evident fact of Christian experience, and there is nothing more certain in the world to-day than that no other attitude of the mind will produce this effect, and that no view or theory of the Atonement, other than the original and historical one, can work this mighty and endur-

ing change in the depths of human nature. Let those deny this who can. I maintain that against any such denial stands the fact of Christian experience throughout twenty centuries of human life.

It is from the Christian sick-bed, from the manner in which the holiest and noblest of men and women have borne their sufferings, from the manifest effect of that suffering upon their ideas and their character, that the world has learnt its best and truest lessons, and those lessons no rationalistic modern philosophy is likely to efface. They are the best and most stable achievements of the race, and they have played the most effective part in its real culture and education.

But the Historic Christian Faith not only intelligently explains the mystery and meaning of suffering and enables man to bear it; it also teaches him how he may, by its means, attain to the highest perfection. And here too we are manifestly on the ground of solid human experience.

It is scarcely necessary, in this connection, to dwell upon the deep moral effects of physical and mental suffering as it comes before us in the sphere of the true Catholic life. We may study those effects in the records of what the saints of God have gladly and willingly endured in every period of Catholic life—with what eagerness they have invited it, when they came to perceive what its hallowing effects were upon their inner nature. They have even resisted any effort calculated to modify or diminish it. They have by its means—

and this testimony is a universal one—experienced joys of which the sensual man can have no possible conception. It has produced in them the highest development of soul and of character, and the manifestation of the noblest virtues of which human nature is capable. It has, in the truest sense, worked in them that holiness which is indeed Godlikeness.

It would be difficult to select from such a vast record of human experience types of life which could in any sense be considered as unique in their character, and in a very special sense to answer the purpose here in view. Let any man, seriously interested in the matter, study the accounts of the early struggles of the Church with pagan life and thought, or the history of the lives of the saints, and let him ask himself whether he knows of anything in the natural order that will explain these things. Could any modern philosophy or "New" Theology have created or developed these perfect types of human life, or enabled the soul to achieve such a complete and glorious victory over the body?

And it must surely be admitted that the chastening influences of the Cross are perceptible wherever its shadow may happen to fall upon human life outside the Church's sphere. Misfortune and sickness and suffering are sometimes, as all the world knows, the most effective means by which the soul is awakened from its slumbers and by which it is turned in a Godward direction. They are always converting and educating agents, even though the soul may not discern their true meaning and their

mystic connection with sin and the Sacrifice of Christ. They always work for good, provided the will be not in open and pronounced rebellion.

"Stars are always in the firmament," says a writer, "but we only see them at night when darkness sets in. So the spiritual eye is better disposed to search for the stars of eternity when misfortune or loss or death have darkened the earthly sun of life, and tears have blurred the natural eye."

A single night of suffering will thus often effect more good than years of experience or of right-doing have done, and the remarkable thing is that the trials of life will often cease quite unexpectedly, and of their own accord, immediately we have "inwardly accepted them" and have become "quite quiet in God."

"What makes suffering so hard to bear," says another writer, "is constant rebellion against it. It increases the trouble until it becomes unbearable. Thoughtful reflection and a recognition that it has a purpose and is from God's hand, not only makes the trouble easy to bear, but brings even physical relief."

It is certainly true, whatever our views of life or religion may be, that on the whole material happiness is a hindrance to interior happiness and to spiritual discernment. The latter is chiefly purchased by suffering. Those greatly favoured by outward circumstances seldom attain to high spiritual perception and perfectness. The spiritually perfect, on the other hand, have generally passed through a

greater measure of suffering than is imposed on the ordinary person. "Every genius is purified in the fire of pain." In proportion as the outer world recedes from us, another spiritual world builds itself up within, and this world gradually takes possession of the soul. It has been rightly observed that faces without the traces of real suffering in them seldom have any expression or indication of character. There is something small and mean in their nature, something insignificant and mediocre, which makes them disliked both by God and man.

And, in any case, "how can things so insecure as the successful experiences of this world afford a stable anchorage? A chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and life is after all a chain. In the healthiest and most prosperous existence, how many links of illness, danger and disaster are always interposed? Unsuspectedly from the bottom of every fountain of pleasure, as the old poet said, something bitter rises up: a whiff of melancholy, things that sound a knell, for fugitive as they may be, they *bring a feeling as coming from a deeper region, and often have an appalling convincingness.* The buzz of life ceases at their touch, as a piano-string stops sounding when the damper falls on it."[1]

The continuous sense of the Cross," says Baron Friedrich Von Hügel, . . . "is the great law and fact that only through self-renunciation and suffering can the soul win its true self, its abiding joy, in union with the source of life, with God, Who has left us, human souls, the choice between two

[1] Prof. Wm. James.

things alone: the noble pangs of spiritual childbirth, of painful, joyous expansion and growth; and the shameful ache of spiritual death, of dreary contraction and decay."

It is instructive to observe how fully some non-Catholic thinkers recognize the action and beneficence of this law, and how clearly they perceive that it is in "life surrendered," not in "life cherished and guarded and treasured," that the highest purpose of human destiny is fulfilled. But with equal clearness do they recognize the freedom of the human will, which may either listen to the divine voice and obey it, or rigidly resist the gentle invitation and make its choice in favour of the life that now is.

This thought is beautifully expressed in the following words of the well-known exponent of the theosophical philosophy:[1]

"An overmastering conviction, an imperious voice, calls on man to surrender his very life. If he shrinks back, he must go on in the life of sensation, the life of the intellect, the life of the world, and as he has the joys he dared not resign, he finds a constant regret and lack of pleasure in the world, and he realizes the truth of the saying of the Christ, that 'he that will save his life shall lose it,' and that the life that was loved and clung to is only lost at last. Whereas if he risks all in obedience to the voice that summons, if he throws away his life, then in losing it he finds it unto 'life eternal,' and he discovers that the life he surrendered was only death

[1] Annie Besant: *Esoteric Christianity.*

in life, that all he gave up was illusion and that he found reality."

4. *Acceptance of Historical Christianity, therefore, is the means by which a real and true connection is made with the higher powers or, to put it in theological language, by which fallen man is restored to the supernatural order.*

It seems to me that if the reasonableness of my general argument be admitted, the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ[1] follows as a necessary and natural consequence. If it be true, that man's misery is ultimately due to his loss of God and to his separation from the life of God,[2] and if experience shows that he cannot, by any natural device, get back to God, it becomes evident that the true restorer can be none other than God Himself. In whatever form the restoration may come, if it is to be a true and effectual restoration, it must be divine in its nature and origin. A merely human restorer, however

[1] Chateaubriand closes his work on "The Genius of Christianity" with the following syllogism:

"Christianity is perfect; men are imperfect.

"Now, a perfect consequence cannot spring from an imperfect principle.

"Christianity, therefore, is not the work of men. If Christianity is not the work of men, it can come from none but God.

"If it came from God, men cannot have acquired a knowledge of it but by revelation. Therefore, Christianity is a revealed religion."

[2] "Were one to characterize the life of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible," writes Prof. James, "one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto."—*The Reality of the Unseen* (Edinburgh Lectures).

great and wonderful, can take us no further than the furthest reaches of human nature, and we have seen that these are wholly insufficient and inadequate to effect the desired end. What we need and crave for is not some higher moral development, but life on another plane of being, contact with a world and world-order which is beyond and above nature. We are yearning for a happiness, which is altogether different *in kind* from that which the present life at its best affords. We desire the pardon and peace of God, complete soul-reconciliation and union with Him; we desire assured means by which we can have access to Him, by which His very life can flow into our life. We desire, moreover, divine guarantees respecting the future.

In the experience of mankind, all these needs and aspirations of the really awakened soul are met, in a marvellous manner, in the God-man, the Link between the world seen and unseen; in the One Who alone could effect and Who alone has effected a reconciliation between the Father and the Child. In the Christ, the Divine Sin-Bearer, the Word of the Father, the God-made-man, connection is made, in the truest and most actual sense, between man and "the Higher Powers," and with this connection the sense of uneasiness, created by the conviction that "there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand," passes away, and there is peace and quietness and satisfaction and a new life, with laws and principles of its own, makes itself manifest in the soul. These are, in simple words, the plain and undeniable facts of human experience. Such an

experience follows upon an humble act of faith in the Historic Christian Truth,[1] upon the belief in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, as the Catholic Church presents and expounds it, and it is absent wherever that belief has been cast aside or has become obscured, or modified, or mutilated by human sophistry. Fully and literally, therefore, does human experience confirm the truth of that mighty saying of St. Augustine: "Thou has made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

Outside the Catholic Church, the sphere of divine operations, there is, as all the world knows, contention, strife, restlessness, uncertainty respecting each single doctrine of the Faith; within the Church, one-ness of thought, peace, restfulness, finality, certainty. The individual who disturbs that restfulness and develops ideas of his own does not, as in other Christian communions, become a leader of a school of thought inside that communion, he passes out of the Church's communion and becomes an additional element in the world of strife.

I have pointed out—and this is my deep personal conviction—that the difficulties which are asserted to lie in the way of this original historic belief are for the most part self-created difficulties. They are

[1] According to the definition of the Vatican Council, faith is a supernatural virtue whereby, inspired and assisted by God's grace, we believe as true the things which He has revealed, not because we perceive their intrinsic truth by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God Himself, Who has revealed them, and Who can neither be deceived nor deceive. cl, Ch. 3.

due to the often unrecognized limitations of our nature, and to the wrong direction which human thought has taken by reason of these limitations; often to intellectual pride and to distrust in the soul's own testimony—to an attempt to measure divine modes of procedure by human methods. In many instances they are due to a perverted moral sense, which seeks to ignore or to minimize the weight of sin and misery which rests upon the conscience of the world, and which overestimates and exaggerates the powers and possibilities of human nature. In some instances they are due to the illegitimate dabbling of science in problems which are beyond its scope, with which it has no concern, and on which, from the very nature of the case, it is altogether unqualified to pronounce.

Much mental perplexity, too, is caused by that wretched inclination to compromise which is so characteristic of the temper of the modern age. There is, in thousands, a keen desire for a settled, orderly spiritual life, and there is in them also a deep soul-conviction that the Catholic Church has in her keeping those supernatural truths which alone make such a life possible. There is, too, the occasional strong desire to make a surrender and to embrace those truths. But worldly wisdom counsels caution and discretion. "It is not wise," it says, "to be extreme and to lose all that this life has to offer. There may, after all, be some flaw in the Catholic argument. So many clever men are not Catholics. And, it must be admitted, there are intellectual

difficulties."[1] Thus the soul catches the faint echo of that ancient whisper of the serpent, and it hesitates and wavers and remains undecided. It despairingly clings to the *shadow* of the truth, whilst its substance is escaping it, and as a consequence, the Supreme Problem of life remains unsolved. The faintheartedness of many Catholics, too, is due to this miserable inclination to compromise, to that scarcely realized desire to possess, if possible, both worlds. And the laws of the spiritual order do not admit of compromise. It is a case of all or of nothing. "He that is not with Me, is against Me."[2] "He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son, hath not life."[3] And from this law there is no escape.

"Man cannot attain to perfect calm," says a modern writer, "until he has entirely surrendered the only thing he really possesses, his will, to God

[1] "The mystic is one who feels that the world has lost God in questions about Him, and would fain recall the world to the happier spirit. But the enemy has insinuated doubt. 'How do you know that what you feel is the highest good?' he suggests; 'there may be some error, some mistake.' You must have proof; you must look carefully for the possibility of a contrary conclusion. I am your true friend; my aim is only to save you from what may be a too hasty conclusion. Till you have asked all possible questions and tried all possible experiments, you can be sure of nothing. You cannot know but that a little further inquiry might not show you an error that you have as yet failed to detect. Therefore put your whole effort into investigation, else you may be concluding without the knowledge of all the facts and be accepting less than the possible of joy."

From *A Plea for Mysticism* by the Rev. George W. Allen, (Hibbert Journal, Jan., 1905.)

[2] S. Matth., xii. 30.

[3] I. S. John, v. 12.

—until he recognizes that his self-love, which by nature pervades and controls him, must be effaced, and that only God can, with the consent of man, efface it."

The doctrine of God-made-man rests upon the fact that the Infinite and the Eternal expresses Himself in terms of time and space, and that it is in this that the love of God consists. The Creation, the Incarnation, the Sacramental System, alike, in various degrees, are the manifestations of God under these conditions. And there is nothing against right reason in this conception; on the contrary, there are, on the grounds of reason alone, numerous presumptions in its favour.

The very notion, or course, of the humble and obscure Galilean being the Son of God and the source and means of the soul's salvation, will always be a veritable stumbling stone and a rock of scandal to the proud human intellect, and I believe that in every age there will be found those who will reject that idea as simply inconceivable. And they will always discover valid and apparently plausible reasons for rejecting it. It seems so contrary to what one might desire and expect. Its acceptance involves such utter humiliation and such a complete confounding of human wisdom. God, it is true, might have effected the salvation and restoration of man in a so much more acceptable and "scientific" manner. But in the very circumstances of its origin, considering these tendencies of human nature, there surely lies forcible evidence in favour of its truth. For let it be borne in mind, that it was "to make foolish the

wisdom of the world"[1] that salvation came by Jesus Christ. The humble and lowly and sin-stricken somehow do not doubt it, and for the saint and the martyr it was not difficult to believe that the Galilean was the Son of God.

That it was unworthy of God to enter into personal and intimate relation with us cannot surely be maintained, seeing that it was not unworthy of Him to create us and to govern us, and seeing that the only enduring happiness that we can attain in this life consists in such personal and intimate relation with Him. He Who created in the human soul the restless craving for Himself cannot be supposed to be demeaning Himself by coming in the form of man to still and satisfy that craving.

The riddle of life, moreover, would become simply maddening if, in view of the abundant and extraordinary evidence before us, we were to reject the belief that He did thus actually come. How could we explain the marvellous fitness of this truth in view of the needs of our nature, the tenacity and persistence with which distressed mankind has clung to it, the extraordinary moral effect which this belief has produced in the world, and, indeed, the very existence of the Catholic Church to-day.

"If a mere falsehood could make its way out of a remote Galilean village; could reform the hideous corruptions of Rome, corruptions so foul that historians dare not give in all their naked horror the pictures of society drawn by Ovid, Juvenal and Martial; if it could command the allegiance of the

[1] I. Cor., i. 20.

hardy warriors of the North, whose swords had won for them the empire of the world; could become the belief of the bravest, truest and most honourable among the nations; could foster their virtues as the highest in man; and, after inspiring the evangelist, nerving the martyr, guiding priest and warrior, king and saint, through the ages that are gone; if after purifying the lives and comforting the deaths of millions, this belief could yet turn out a lie in the end, then, indeed, our best criteria of truth and falsehood are lost, and we can only turn in disdainful Pyrrhonism from a record which would revolt every instinct of the human heart."[1]

And speaking once more of the reliability of human experience in this grave and all-important matter, I would say this: "Is it a rational universe if the moral life of mankind be founded on an illusion? Can the holiness of the world's saints, the virtues of its best heroes, the moral life of the mass of mankind, have had their source and origin, their never-failing food and support in one huge hallucination?"[2]

It is wholly impossible, for a properly balanced mind, to accept such an explanation of the matter, so long as it is admitted that a personal and holy God, Who concerns Himself with the welfare of mankind and of the individual soul, exists. The natural and necessary conclusion, therefore, is, that since there is agreement, for the Catholic Christian, between the external voice of the Church speaking in the name of Christ, and the internal voice of the soul,

[1] V. C. Desertis.
[2] Rev. M. Maher, Ph. D.: *Psychology*. P. 536.

moved or attuned, as he believes, by the operation of divine grace, a degree of certainty and finality is reached beyond which it would seem difficult for human nature to go. Indeed it is not easy to see how a higher degree of certainty could be reached, considering the source of the disclosure and the necessary limitations of human nature.

"The man who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness (regarded from the point of view indicated), seeks he does not know what, dissatisfied with the reality of man and of God, as he finds them there in experience, he may be invited to state intelligently what would content him.'[1]

My own firm conviction is, that the distrust in the reliability of this twofold witness in the world to the existence and operation of the supernatural order, is due on the one hand to the direct work of the spirit of evil, and on the other to that mis- or

[1] It will, I trust, be sufficiently clear from what I have said, that I am not defending the principle of subjectivism in respect of the Christian Religion. I am neither asserting that Supernatural Truth can be discovered by the unaided faculties of the soul or elicited from the manifestations of our moral consciousness, nor that its sole evidences are to be found in those manifestations. This would be to misconceive the entire aim of my reasoning. For it is just this that our natural faculties cannot accomplish. All the experience of mankind goes to show that the natural cannot unaided reach the supernatural, and that if the latter exists and is to be known by man, it must disclose itself to him. What I am contending for is, that while the available evidence shows both the need as well as the fact of an external objective Revelation, and Historical Christianity to be that Revelation, our awakened moral nature confirms, when rightly questioned, its truth and divine origin, thus affording a degree of certainty in religion, which should be sufficient for all men of good will.

mal-development of subjective human faculty which is the inevitable result of the modern revival of occult and necromantic practices.

The hidden, subtle and, so far, but very imperfectly known powers of the soul are at present, as we have seen, experiencing a development on a lower plane in the form of clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychometry, speaking with tongues, etc. These are cultivated to gratify human curiosity; often to make money. In their proper and legitimate development, they should produce spiritual perception, mind-illumination, discernment of divine truth, a certain receptivity in a God-ward direction. The results of this mal-development are but too apparent, and I have at sufficient length, I think, indicated in what they consist. It is a substitution of the preternatural for the supernatural. Man falls a victim to spirits instead of becoming subject to the Spirit.

Thus all these modern tendencies of thought—the exclusively intellectual and critical movement on the one hand, and the occult movement on the other—whatever may be urged in their favour, are beyond doubt effective means by which the mind is kept in a state of doubt and uncertainty respecting Christian truth. They either go to diminish the force of the divine witness in the heart, or they expel that witness from the heart altogether. And it is in this way that the enemy of man attains his end in the modern age.

For doubt and misgiving as to the fundamental verities of the Faith are incompatible with a true

spiritual life. Our nature is so constituted that we cannot maintain a negative religious attitude and yet cultivate the spiritual powers of the soul, or, indeed, live a true spiritual life. It is impossible for us to build up a true Christian life on uncertainty. Suspense of the mind, in the matter of religious truth, is practically unbelief. There must be a time when we are questioning and examining; but that time, unduly prolonged, produces a fixed state of mind and that state is unbelief. It tends to enervate the mind and the moral nature, and causes a kind of spiritual paralysis.

"Doubt and devotion," writes Cardinal Newman,[1] are incompatible with each other; every doubt, be it greater or less, stronger or weaker, involuntary as well as voluntary, acts upon devotion, so far forth, as water sprinkled or dashed or poured upon a flame. Real and proper doubt kills faith and devotion with it; and even involuntary or half-deliberate doubt, though it does not actually kill faith, goes far to kill devotion; and religion without devotion is little better than a burden and soon becomes a superstition."

That these doubts are unlawful and often have an evil source, may be gathered from the circumstance that when they enter the minds of seriously-disposed persons they create sadness and misery, not joy and satisfaction, however reasonable and well-founded they may seem at the time. Indeed it is a matter of very definite experience, that the disappearance from the human heart of belief in the

[1] *Discussions and Arguments.* P. 366.

Divine Christ leaves a void in the heart which nothing in this world can fill. This in itself is evidence that there is such a thing as a divine witness, and a conviction which is superior to and independent of the intellect. It is, to my mind, conclusive evidence that the soul may and does perceive truths which bring their own evidence with them. And this evidence disappears only when undue license is given to the intellect, and when it is allowed to exercise itself beyond its powers and limitations.

Father Hecker very beautifully expressed this when he wrote: "There is a conviction which lies deeper than all thought and speech . . . which arguments cannot reach, nor any visible power make to falter. Words are powerless against it and inexpressive of it; to attempt to explain or to give to an intellectual mind the reason why and wherefore would be as impossible as to paint the heavens or to utter the eternal word, the centre of all existence. It would be like asking, wherefore is that which is? —the finite questioning the infinite."

It is remarkable and significant, too, as an experienced and learned priest pointed out to me the other day, that rejection of the Supernatural, and of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, is almost always followed by a relaxed hold on ethical truths. There takes place in the soul a kind of second fall. The moral nature, deprived of this powerful stay, experiences a sort of deterioration, expressing itself in looseness of thought and action, and in a seriously diminished sense of responsibility.

It is, on the other hand, matter of common experience that acceptance of this truth strengthens the very fibres of the moral nature. It elevates the judgment, quickens the sensibilities of the conscience and attunes the entire being to the harmonies of the spiritual order. It is because of all these forcible considerations, weighed separately and as a whole, that Cardinal Newman summed up the entire argument in those striking words in which I, too, would venture to sum it up:

"*Either the Catholic Religion is verily the coming of the unseen world into this, or there is nothing positive, nothing dogmatic, nothing real in any of our notions as to whence we come and whither we go.*"

In the historic doctrines, then, of the Fall of Man and of his Restoration in Jesus Christ, witnessed to, as they are, by right reason and by the deepest and truest experiences of the soul, and in a constant recognition of the fact that there is now an actual conflict in the world between the powers of light and of darkness, the Supreme Problem of life is solved, so far as mortal and finite man can hope to solve it.

Not only is the mystery of his complex nature, its defects and disorders and inconsistencies, on the one hand; its longings and cravings and aspirations, on the other, intelligently explained and accounted for, but those cravings are also successfully and permanently satisfied. A kind of finality and certainty is reached by the soul, which expresses itself in content and quietness of mind, in a patient and even joyous bearing of life's burdens and crosses,

and in that abiding soul-peace which passes human understanding and which admittedly is not easily obtained where these truths are not held. And I think I have shown, in the course of my treatment of the subject, what good and solid reasons we have for trusting in the validity of these soul-experiences.

It thus becomes possible for man, on the ground of clearly ascertained and accepted truth, to abandon controversy and speculation and to devote himself to the culture and education of his soul, both finding and striving after a true and worthy and elevated and really satisfying aim and purpose in life. It becomes possible, on the other hand, for the Gospel to accomplish its mission in him.

To some persons, strange to say, the very possibility of this certainty and finality is almost inconceivable. Four centuries of contention, of controversy, and of protest, have created around them a very atmosphere of unrest and of mental strife, and so habitual has life in that atmosphere become to them that they have lost the very power of imagining the atmosphere of certainty and finality and peace. When they happen to come in contact with it they shrink from it and they display the utmost eagerness to deny its reality. They have come to regard it as a superior intellectual position to be for ever seeking the truth rather than to possess it and enjoy it. They have learnt to place more confidence in the discordant but audible voices of men, than in the clear, though perhaps still, small voice of God speaking in the soul. They cannot believe that if God has His own great secrets to impart, He

has also His own methods of imparting them, and that it is just possible that both His secrets and His methods of imparting them are beyond human scrutiny and analysis. But the return to God and to truth, to peace and certainty, does not and cannot lie along the way of contention and controversy, of an incessant discussion and re-discussion of theological problems, but along the way of simplicity of thought, of heart, and of mind, and of perfect trust in those soul-experiences, in their relation to the Historic Christian Faith, which witness so strongly to the existence of a supernatural world-order and to man's personal relation to that order.

The return to truth, to happiness and to peace, is possible only through faith in the Divine Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour, as He originally revealed Himself, as He has revealed Himself throughout the subsequent centuries, and as He reveals Himself to-day in His one true Church, and in every true and humble and contrite heart. It is in Him and in Him alone that the Supreme Problem of Life is solved.

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